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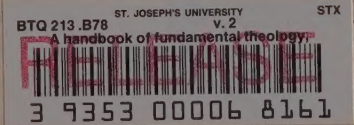
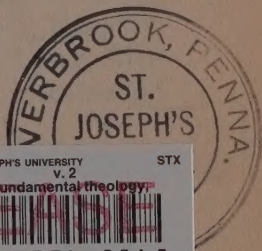
THE REVEREND JOHN BRUNSMANN, S.V.D.

ADAPTED AND EDITED BY
ARTHUR PREUSS

VOLUME II
REVEALED RELIGION

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PREFACE

In adapting this second part of the first volume of Father Brunsmann's *Lehrbuch der Apologetik* I have again made liberal use of the reverend author's kind permission to add, subtract, and alter in text and footnotes as I saw fit. This volume has grown to rather large proportions in the process, but in view of the dearth of up to date literature on the subject in our language, I trust most students will consider this an advantage rather than a hindrance. After all, the work is not intended as a text-book, but for collateral reading, private study, and reference.

I again have to thank the Revs. J. B. Tennelly, S.S., S.T.D., Joseph Molitor, D.D., Leo F. Miller, D.D., and Henry J. Heck, for valuable aid in reading the proofsheets.

Volume III of the series, which is nearly ready for the printer, will deal with the Church of Christ, its Establishment, Nature and Marks. It will be followed by a fourth and final volume on the infallible teaching office of the Church, the exercise of that office through the centuries, and the reception of the Church's teaching by faith on the part of those who wish to be saved.

ARTHUR PREUSS

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INTRODUCTION

In dealing with supernaturally revealed religion we shall have to answer mainly two questions, one philosophical, the other historical. The former has to do with the nature and conditions of supernatural revelation, the latter with the actual existence of such a revelation and its divine origin. Hence the present volume falls naturally into two parts.

PART I

NATURE AND CONDITIONS OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

CHAPTER I

NOTION AND POSSIBILITY OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

§ I. NOTION OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

I. Origin of the Concept

Since it is our task in this volume to set forth the foundations of Catholic belief, and since, according to Catholic teaching, supernatural revelation constitutes a necessary condition of faith, we must first study the true concept of supernatural revelation in the light of dogma before endeavoring to justify it by the aid of reason.

The teaching of the Church concerning the nature of revelation is contained mainly in the decrees of the Vatican Council.¹ In developing it we shall follow approved theologians.

2. The Supernatural Order

a) The notion of the supernatural is inseparably connected with that of the natural. Only

¹ *Concilium Vaticanum*, Sess. III, cap. 2; Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, *Enchiridion*, n. 1785 sqq.

after the limits of the latter are known, is it possible to say just where the supernatural begins.

What do we call natural? *Natural is whatever belongs to the nature of an object*, no matter whether that object is material or spiritual. To the nature of an object belongs first of all its essence, its *quidditas*, as the Schoolmen were wont to say, *i. e.*, that by which it is what it is and as it is. In the essence are rooted the different faculties, dispositions, and powers. These, when developed and applied, result in operation. All this, so far as it springs from the innermost being and essence of a thing, is natural, just as the essence itself is natural.

Natural are furthermore all the perfections which result from the operation of the dispositions, faculties, and powers inherent in a being. Natural are, finally, the external conditions and presuppositions of a being's operation, in as far as they are demanded by the constitution and needs of that being's nature, *i. e.*, the aim and object of its activity and the possibility of its attaining that aim by the use of its own powers.

Having thus delimited the sphere of the natural, we are in a position to define the supernatural. *Supernatural is that which transcends*

the nature, faculties or needs of a being. Supernatural, consequently, is every perfection (for instance, sanctifying grace) which is not demanded by the internal constitution of a being. Supernatural, furthermore, is every perfection of the powers of nature (*e. g.*, habitual grace) which cannot be deduced from either the essence or the dispositions of a being or from its operation and the conditions under which that operation ordinarily takes place.

If we apply these truths to *man*, we find that every perfection of his nature that is found neither in his essence nor in the faculties, dispositions, and powers of that nature, in other words, which transcends the essence, powers, and needs of nature,—is supernatural.

There are two species of the supernatural, namely, the modally supernatural (*s. quoad modum*) and the substantially supernatural (*s. quoad substantiam*). The former is supernatural only by virtue of the manner or form of its communication, not by virtue of what is communicated. To this category belongs, for example, the sudden restoration of health effected by divine intervention in the case of a patient who might possibly have been cured by the slow processes of nature, but not suddenly. Here it is not the cure itself, but its suddenness, which

transcends the powers of nature and must consequently be regarded as supernatural.

When not merely the manner of communication, but likewise that which is communicated, transcends the powers of nature, we have what is called by Scholastics *supernaturale quoad substantiam*. Examples of this would be: the restoration of life to a corpse, the communication of some future, contingent event, sanctifying grace, the supernatural virtues, etc. Nature can do none of these things. Neither can it legitimately require God to bestow any of them upon it.

This definition enables us to perceive the distinction that exists between the supernatural on the one hand, and the unnatural, contranatural, miraculous, supersensible, and suprarational on the other.

Unnatural is that which is not externally befitting to the nature of a thing and which consequently hinders or threatens its well-being or development. Thus it would be unnatural for a man to be cut off in infancy from all intercourse with his fellowmen and to grow up completely isolated in an uninhabited desert. The supernatural, on the contrary, is a perfection which elevates the nature of an object or a be-

ing in conformity with its constitution, though no positive disposition for, or natural need of, such elevation can be assumed to exist.

The *miraculous*, in so far as it implies an effect transcending the powers of nature, belongs to the sphere of the supernatural, and differs from the latter merely as a species from its genus; it always bears the characteristic mark of the exceptional and extraordinary.

The *suprasensible* must not be confounded with the supernatural because, on the one hand, much that transcends the senses (such as the life of the soul), is natural, whereas, on the other hand, much that is supernatural (such as the miraculous cure of blindness) belongs, at least in one respect, to the domain of sense perception.

The *suprarational*, finally, differs from the supernatural in this respect, that it expresses merely the relation of the latter to human reason. This is not, however, to be understood as if the supernatural must necessarily transcend the powers of reason in every respect. There are truths which may be made the object of supernatural revelation even though they do not transcend human reason at all. The supernatural in general is suprarational only in so far as its deepest motive, *i. e.*, its divine causation,

cannot be adequately comprehended by any created intelligence.²

b) *The Supernatural Order*.—We may describe the supernatural order, in so far as man is concerned, as his destiny for a supernatural end, together with the various supernatural means appointed for the attainment of that end. By positive divine ordinance the supernatural end of man is the immediate possession and enjoyment of God by beatific knowledge and love. Human nature as such is not equipped for the attainment of this goal, and consequently needs to be supernaturally perfected and assisted. The

² On the notion of the supernatural see Ign. Ottiger, S.J., *Theol. Fundamentalis*, Vol. I, pp. 41-49; R. Garrigou and P. Lagrange, *De Revelatione*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1921, l. I, cap. 4; J. M. de Ripalda, *De Ente Supernaturali*, Vols. I and II, ed. Vivès, Paris, 1871; Jos. Kleutgen, S.J., *Theologie der Vorzeit*, Vol. II, 2nd ed., Münster, 1872, n. 4 sqq.; F. Hettinger, *Fundamentaltheologie*, 3rd ed., by S. Weber, Freiburg, 1913, pp. 105 sqq.; J. J. Urráburu, *Institutiones Philosophicae*, Vol. II, Valladolid, 1891, pp. 604 sqq.; Jos. Pohle, *Natur und Uebernatur* in Esser-Mausbach, *Religion, Christentum, Kirche: Eine Apologetik für wissenschaftlich Gebildete*, Vol. I, 5th ed., Kempten, 1923, pp. 375-538; Pohle-Preuss, *God the Author of Nature and the Supernatural*, pp. 180 sqq., 5th ed., St. Louis, 1926; J. F. Sollier in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV, pp. 336 sqq.; J. V. Bainvel, S.J., *Nature et Supernaturel*, Paris, 1903; G. Geiger, *Gott und Welt, Natur und Uebernatur*, Donauwörth, 1907; A. Rademacher, *Gnade und Natur*, M. Gladbach, 1908; J. J. Baierl, *The Theory of Revelation*, Vol. I, Rochester, N. Y., 1927, pp. 5 sqq.; Jos. Mausbach, *Catholic Moral Teaching and its Antagonists*, N. Y., 1914, pp. 312 sqq.

intellect requires higher instruction to perceive man's supernatural goal and the means appointed for its attainment, while the will cannot reach out for that goal unless it is elevated and strengthened by supernatural grace.

The foundation of the study of the supernatural order with its treasures of truth and grace is supernatural divine *revelation*.

3. Divine Revelation

a) *Concept of Divine Revelation*.—To reveal means to make known something which was unknown before, to unveil to the intellect a truth or a fact of which it had no previous knowledge.

The term *revelation* may designate both the act of communicating knowledge and the communicated knowledge itself. Here we are interested mainly in the former, *i.e.*, the manner in which knowledge is communicated. Revelation in this sense, that is, as manifestation of the truth, primarily concerns the intellect. It may proceed from any rational being, but we are here concerned only with the revelation that comes immediately from God.

Divine revelation is mentioned frequently both in the Old and in the New Testament. As a rule it is designated by the verb ἀποκαλύπτειν

(*revelare*),³ to which corresponds the noun ἀποκάλυψις (*revelatio*).⁴ But we also meet with the term φανεροῦν (*manifestare*)⁵ and its corresponding noun φανέρωσις (*manifestatio*).⁶ Of less frequent occurrence are the verbs ἀναφαίνειν⁷ and ἀνακαλύπτειν⁸ (*manifestare*) and the adjectival phrases: φανερόν ποιεῖν, γίνεσθαι, ἐλθεῖν (*manifestare*).⁹

While the expression differs, the sense in all the Biblical passages here under consideration is the same, namely, the manifestation or unveiling of an object or a truth, regardless of whether that object or truth came into being at the moment it was revealed, or whether it existed previously and revelation meant merely the removal of an obstacle to its perception. Revelation opens that which was previously shut, it lights up (φανέρωσις, φαίνειν) that which was dark and hidden, it unveils that which lay concealed

³ E. g., 1 Kings III, 21; IX, 15; Prov. XX, 19; Is. XL, 5; Dan. II, 19 sqq.; Matth. X, 26; XI, 25, 27; XVI, 17; 1 Cor. II, 10; Gal. I, 16; Phil. III, 15.

⁴ Rom. XVI, 25; 2 Cor. XII, 1; Gal. I, 12; II, 2; Eph. III, 3.

⁵ Eccli. I, 7; Mark IV, 22; John I, 31; II, 11; XVII, 6; Rom. I, 19.

⁶ 1 Cor. XII, 7.

⁷ Luke XIX, 11.

⁸ Tob. XII, 11.

⁹ Mark III, 12; Luke VIII, 17.

(ἀποκάλυψις, *revelatio*), and, as it were, brings secret things before our eyes in a tangible manner.

b) *Natural and Supernatural Revelation*.—God has revealed Himself in a twofold manner, naturally and supernaturally. The difference between these two kinds of revelation lies entirely in the means employed. Natural revelation takes place through the created universe, which by its very existence incites human reason to reflect upon its nature and origin. Study shows the created universe to be the effect of a cause substantially different from itself and absolutely self-existing. This cause we call *God*. Thus the created universe by its very nature—hence the term *natural* revelation—conducts man to the knowledge of God. In other words, the things that constitute the created universe reveal to us the existence and nature of God, or, in so far as God created the universe for this purpose, He manifests Himself in His essence and existence to natural reason through the created universe.

Supernatural revelation is a special divine operation which does not form part of the creation and preservation of the universe, but consists in the communication to man, by means of intelligible terms, of such truths as will en-

able him to know and attain his supernatural goal.

c) *Supernatural Revelation "quoad modum" and "quoad substantiam."*—Revelation demands a special intervention on the part of God for the purpose of communicating knowledge to man. If the communicated truth pertains to the sphere of the purely natural and is of a kind which reason might have discovered by its own unaided efforts, the supernatural element lies entirely in the *manner of communication*, and a revelation of this sort is called *supernaturale quoad modum*.

If the communicated truth transcends the natural powers of the human mind, and can be known only through supernatural revelation, the latter is called substantially supernatural (*supernaturale quoad substantiam*).

All supernatural revelation, therefore, is supernatural *quoad modum*, *i. e.*, in regard to the manner in which it is made, but not necessarily *quoad substantiam*, that is, in respect of the truths revealed.

d) *Immediate and Mediate Revelation.*—With regard to the manner in which it is made, supernatural revelation on the part of God may be either immediate or mediate. It is called immediate when God speaks directly to a man;

mediate, when He employs human agents in communicating His message. (Revelation through the agency of an angel is usually regarded as equivalent to immediate revelation.)¹⁰

e) *Internal and External Revelation*.—The manner in which revealed truths are received by man gives rise to a distinction between internal and external revelation. A revelation is *internal* if it involves only the immanent faculties of the soul, *i. e.*, reason and imagination; it is *external* if the senses also are affected.

God, in revealing to man truths of the supernatural order, may work immediately upon the reason and the imagination by communicating certain ideas, thoughts, and visions corresponding to these truths; or He may act upon the senses by externally perceptible words, symbols, objects, and events which serve to convey or illustrate the truths He wishes to reveal.

It is to these different methods of communication that St. Paul refers when he says: "God . . . at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets. . . ." ¹¹ Here are a few examples: John

¹⁰ Cfr. Ign. Ottiger, S.J., *Theologia Fundamentalis*, Vol. I, Freiburg, 1897, p. 47.

¹¹ "*Multifariam multisque modis olim Deus loquens patribus in prophetis. . . .*" (Heb. I, 1.). Cfr. F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of*

XIV, 16 sq.: "He shall give you another Paraclete, . . . the spirit of truth, . . . he shall be in you." ¹² John XVI, 13: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth." ¹³ These are examples of purely internal instruction. In Jer. I, 13 sqq., the prophet sees the hostile power in a symbolic vision, the signification of which is duly explained to him. In 1 Kings III, 4, Samuel hears the voice of the Lord calling him. In Matth. VI, 26 sqq., certain instructions are given by Christ in connection with external objects, namely, the birds of heaven and the lilies of the field. In Matth. X, 15, a historical event (the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrha) is employed as a means to foreshadow an impending catastrophe.

f) *Private and Public Revelation*.—According to the purpose for which, and the persons to whom it is given, revelation is either *private* or *public*. The former is addressed to individuals for special purposes; the latter, to humanity at large, with religious instruction as its object.

St. Paul, tr. by J. S. Stoddard, Vol. I, London and New York, 1926, pp. 367 sq.

¹² John XIV, 16 sq.: "*Alium Paraclitum dabit vobis, . . . Spiritum veritatis, . . . et in vobis erit.*"

¹³ John XVI, 13: "*Cum autem venerit ille Spiritus veritatis, docebit vos omnem veritatem.*"

g) *The Process of Revelation.*—The communication of previously unknown truths by divine revelation is not to be understood, however, as though God implanted in the recipient's mind ideas or images without any corresponding activity on the part of the mind itself. This would scarcely be consistent with the nature of the intellect, which is an inherently active faculty. In the supernatural as in the natural order, God, in acting upon creatures, takes into consideration the nature which He has given them and the laws of activity which He Himself has implanted in them. The supernatural is calculated to elevate and perfect the natural, not to suppress or destroy it. Consequently, when God reveals something to man, the mind responds to God's action. In this operation, nevertheless, God the Revealer gives the first impulse, He directs the mental act, and He furnishes the entire subject-matter of the revelation. In revealing His truths, God, on the other hand, adapts Himself to the individual character and temperament of the human recipient, as well as to the purpose of the particular revelation. This explains the great variety of expressions and points of view which we meet with in the records of revelation.

Since the ideas and terms employed in super-

natural revelation apply, not to objects immediately corresponding to them, but to objects that are similar, our knowledge of supernaturally revealed truths, whilst perfectly true, remains nevertheless analogous.

h) *Revelation and Inspiration*.—Supernatural revelation must not be confounded with *inspiration*.¹⁴

Inspiration, like revelation, is a divine and supernatural operation; but its object may be any truth, even one previously perceived by reason. On the other hand, God may reveal a truth without moving the recipient to set it down in writing. *Inspiration*, therefore, is essentially *a supernatural impulse by which God directs an author to write down certain matters predetermined by Him*, whereas revelation is simply the supernatural communication of hitherto unknown truths.¹⁵

¹⁴ Leo XIII, Encyclical "*Providentissimus Deus*;" Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1952; Addis and Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary*, Revised by T. B. Scannell, 9th ed., London, 1917, pp. 459 sq.; Lagrange, *Historical Criticism and the Old Testament*, (Engl. tr.), pp. 83 sqq.; Chr. Pesch, S.J., *De Inspiratione S. Scripturae*, Freiburg, 1906, (reprinted 1925); J. V. Bainvel, S.J., *De Scriptura Sacra*, Paris, 1910; Æ. Dorsch, S.J., *De Inspiratione S. Scripturae*, Innsbruck, 1912; Hil. Felder, O. M. Cap., *Apologetica sive Theologia Fundamental*, Vol. II, 2nd ed., Paderborn, 1923, pp. 273 sqq.

¹⁵ Cfr. Chr. Pesch, S.J., *De Inspiratione Sacrae Scripturae*, pp. 409 sqq.; see also Vol. IV of this *Handbook*.

§ II. POSSIBILITY OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

In this section we shall consider the possibility (1) of supernatural revelation in general, (2) more specifically of the revelation of mysteries, and (3) of mediate revelation.

1. The Possibility of Revelation in General

1. Having explained the concept of supernatural revelation, we must now demonstrate its possibility. This is necessary in order to justify Catholic teaching against the attacks of Monism, Deism, and Rationalism, all of which for *a priori* reasons flatly deny the possibility of supernatural revelation. *Monism* cannot admit the possibility of divine revelation because it refuses to acknowledge the existence of a supra-mundane, personal God. *Deism* is compelled to deny the possibility of revelation because it holds God to be so immutable that He cannot exert any influence whatever on the created universe. *Rationalism* must oppose revelation because, while it does not, at least in its moderate form, deny the possibility of a communication from God to man, it regards the transmission of definite truths as unlikely, since it

is incompatible with its peculiar theory of knowledge.

Our argument presupposes the theistic point of view, *i. e.*, the belief in a supramundane, personal God, who is the Creator of the universe.

2. In employing the term "supernatural revelation" we have in mind immediate, not mediate, divine revelation, which latter we shall consider later on. Once the possibility of immediate revelation is established, there is no serious obstacle to the divulgation of revealed truths.

3. Whatever is capable of being, becoming, or happening is called *possible*. Possibility is either intrinsic or extrinsic. A thing is intrinsically or *metaphysically possible* if the elements of which it is to consist are capable of being united into one essence, or if the various parts of a concept can be combined without contradiction. In this sense, *e. g.*, a golden ring or a steel pen is possible. A thing is extrinsically or *physically possible* if there exists a cause sufficient to call it into being. It is *morally possible* if that cause is a free, rational agent, whose character and subjective inclination are such as to move it to realize a possible notion. A thing is called *morally impossible* if the difficulties in the way of

its realization are so great that, though the physical power of the cause, absolutely speaking, is sufficient to overcome them, in matter of fact the intended goal would be attained only in rare cases. Hence, for man, something may be physically possible and at the same time morally impossible.

To demonstrate the possibility of supernatural revelation we have to show that there is no intrinsic or extrinsic reason why God could not communicate with man. The course of the argument is mapped out for us by the three factors which have a share in revelation, namely, (1) God, (2) man, and (3) the truths to be communicated. The possibility of revelation on the part of God belongs to the sphere of both intrinsic and extrinsic, that on the part of man, mainly to the sphere of intrinsic possibility.

4. As regards the *nature of the truths* to be communicated by revelation, all that is required is that they shall not be known to the recipient before they are supernaturally revealed.

Hence we have first to prove the possibility of a supernatural revelation *quoad modum*. This possibility has been defined by the Vatican Council as an article of faith: "If anyone shall say that it is impossible or inexpedient that

man should be taught by divine revelation concerning God and the worship to be paid to Him; let him be anathema." ¹⁶

We assert that **immediate supernatural divine revelation is possible**, and we prove this proposition (1) from the essence of God, (2) from the nature of man, and (3) from the character of the truths to be revealed.

Since supernatural revelation is a divine manifestation of truths to man, it must be regarded as possible if it is in accord with the essence of God, with the nature of man, and with the truth to be communicated by the former to the latter. Now, supernatural revelation is in accord with the essence of God, with the nature of man, and with the truths to be communicated by the former to the latter. Therefore, supernatural revelation is possible.

1. Supernatural revelation is in accord with the essence of God.

a) Supernatural revelation corresponds admirably to the *power* and *perfection* of God. It is a peculiar kind of outward divine activity.

¹⁶ *Conc. Vat.*, Sess. III, can. 2, *de Revelat.*: "*Si quis dixerit, fieri non posse aut non expedire, ut per revelationem divinam homo de Deo cultuque ei exhibendo doceatur: anathema sit.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1807).

This activity, by which God produces something different from Himself, does not involve a contradiction or an imperfection. That peculiarity of revelation by which it produces a change in the intellectual life of man and furnishes him with new matter for thought, can also be easily reconciled with the theistic concept of God. If men can enrich the knowledge of their fellow-men by instruction, surely God, who has given them this faculty, must *a fortiori* be able to produce the same effect by direct action. Moreover, God not only gave man the power to communicate his thoughts, but Himself physically co-operates in every human act. Every act which man performs is entitatively of divine origin. Besides, God not only has full command of all those means over which man disposes in order to communicate his thoughts to others, but in consequence of His divine concursus, He can influence the human mind without the aid of words or pictures, and cause it to form new ideas.

That God, to whom all possible and actual truths are constantly and clearly present, does not lack matter to communicate to His creatures, goes without saying.

Finally, God is undoubtedly able to offer to man full certitude that it is He who is speaking.

In our ordinary intercourse with our fellowmen we have no difficulty in ascertaining to whom we are indebted for this or that information. The power to communicate ideas is inborn in the human soul. Should not God, to whom we owe this faculty, be able to give our mind the light and power necessary to recognize Him with certainty when He speaks to us?

True, we are not able *a priori* to explain just how and by what means God communicates His truths to men. But that is no reason why we should deny the possibility of such a communication. Even the natural process of cognition in our own soul, and its connection with the objects of the outside world, is not fully clear to us; yet no sane man would therefore deny the possibility of interior cognition or of the reality of objects existing outside the mind.

Consequently, there is no obstacle to supernatural revelation on the part of divine omnipotence. God can enter into immediate intercourse with His rational creatures; He possesses all truth; He is able to make Himself known to man as the author of a supernatural communication.

b) Supernatural revelation also corresponds to the *wisdom* of God, which requires that

every divine act should be directed to a rational end. Revelation puts man in the possession of new knowledge. It will not do to say that such a mode of instruction contradicts the wisdom of God, because it is nothing more or less than a subsequent improvement of human nature, the supplying of some perfection which man lacked when he first came from the hands of the Creator. According to the Catholic view, supernatural revelation, if it was to be *de facto* realized, had from all eternity to be included in the divine plan of leading the human race to its final goal. Nor can it be proved that revelation, if it was contained in the divine scheme of creation, would of necessity have had to take place at the very outset of human development. Gradual progress towards higher perfection might have corresponded just as well to the intentions of the all-wise Creator as primordial perfection. Finally, it is absurd to maintain that revelation involves an undue interference with the evolution of the human race. It does interfere with natural evolution, but this interference, in the form of divine instruction, is not an undue disturbance of human development any more than is the instruction of a child by his parents and teachers. On the contrary, this instruction, be-

ing imparted by divine wisdom, must be regarded as a suitable means of advancing man's intellectual development.

2. *Supernatural revelation is possible on the part of man.* In order to receive a knowledge of divinely revealed truths, the human mind must be open to them. This receptivity exists as long as man is not in the full possession of truth; for, until he knows all truth, he is capable of knowing more, *i. e.*, susceptible of instruction. As human knowledge, in the natural sphere, progresses steadily, yet is never complete, and rests largely upon human authority, there is no reason why the limits of human knowledge could not be enlarged by supernatural instruction and why divine authority should not have a place side by side with human authority in furnishing the mind with the greatest imaginable guaranty of truth. Were we to refuse our assent to a divine communication which excludes error and deception, we could not logically admit human authority as a source of knowledge, and all sciences (*e. g.*, geography, ethnology, history), which by their very nature depend upon human observation and authority, would be impossible, nay, mutual intercourse between men would cease, and the social order itself would come to an end. Man from early

youth to old age depends in many things entirely upon the authority of others, and this authority constitutes for him a source of knowledge of at least equal importance with personal experience and introspection.¹⁷

In the reception of revealed truths, as we have seen,¹⁸ human co-operation is not in any way impaired, much less entirely abolished, but the activity of man's mind is rather brought to higher perfection. Consequently, the Rationalist contention that the soul would remain entirely passive in receiving revealed truths, and that the communication of such truths is therefore impossible, has no foundation in fact.¹⁹

¹⁷ Cfr. F. W. Foerster, *Autorität und Freiheit*, 19th to 21st ed., Kempten, 1922, p. 62.

¹⁸ *Supra.*, p. 26.

¹⁹ O. Pfeiderer (*Das Wesen der Religion*, 2nd ed., Leipsic, 1878, pp. 378 sq.) says: "From this it follows above all, that we must not conceive of revelation as if it absolutely excluded all independent activity on the part of man, as would manifestly be the case if it were conceived as the supernatural communication of definite, ready-made dogmas, notions or views. Such a proceeding is beyond all analogy, nay, outside of all psychological possibility. Not a single view or opinion or shred of knowledge enters the human mind as the ready-made product of an external cause. What we receive from the outside are mere impressions, emotions, etc., which are formed into definite views and opinions by the mind acting in conformity with the laws of nature. . . . It is impossible that religious concepts should originate differently. A religious concept not formed by ourselves in harmony with the general laws of our intellectual activity, . . . would not fit into the context of our other ideas, and would,

Equally untenable is the theory of those who assert ²⁰ that revealed truths have a purely rela-

therefore, remain uncomprehended. . . . It would be impossible to be convinced of the truth of such concepts, for conviction can only grow out of the rational connexion of one set of ideas with others. Finally, too, such an extraneous concept would not be recognizable in relation to its origin, *i. e.*, as a revelation coming from God. The purely formal criterion of objective evidence plainly does not suffice, else every dreamer could claim for his most absurd imaginings the character of divine revelation." Therefore, according to this writer, revelation can consist only in "an influence exerted by God upon the emotions," and revelation is "the redemption from sin effected by God in man and reconciliation with God." These false views are sufficiently refuted by what we say in the text. Cfr. also D. F. Strauss, *Die christliche Glaubenslehre*, Vol. I, Tübingen, 1840, pp. 274 sqq.

²⁰ O. Pfleiderer (*Religionsphilosophie*, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1896, pp. 493 sq.) says: "All new ideas and ideals that have stirred the world originated with individuals, who did not arbitrarily invent these ideas and ideals, nor discover them by laborious reflection, as scientific truths are discovered by investigation; but received them by way of that involuntary intuition which is vouchsafed also to the creative artist, and which is everywhere the prerogative of the 'genius' to whom the nature of things and the destiny of mankind lie open. But as every revelation is certainly first of all a personal experience, received and shaped in the depths of individual genius, so the thousandfold echo which its communication awakens in others, betrays the fact that it [the revelation] merely constitutes the correct expression of what slumbered unconsciously or was darkly felt in the souls of others. Not as if revelation for this reason was to be conceived as a product of the common consciousness of the age, *i. e.*, of the ruling opinions of the majority. These opinions, on the contrary, are invariably opposed by the prophet of higher truth, as innumerable examples from the Old Testament to the present day show. Nevertheless, in all such cases the revelation of the religious genius is the expression of that which the noblest men of his age have felt and yearned for, the

tive character and are essentially of no more importance than the utterances of men endowed with great genius.

unveiling of their own better self, the fulfilment of their own highest hope. It is from this source that the revelation coming from any one individual derives its power to draw men together into communities. By testifying in word and deed to the divine truth which has been revealed to him, and which controls his whole personal life, the prophet attracts others by the impression of his personality, and evokes in them the same spiritual experiences, inspires them with enthusiasm for the same ideals, and thus institutes a higher community life, a congregation of faithful believers, in which the revelation of one man becomes the common property of many."—And again, p. 497: "If we consider, on the one hand, that all, even the highest religious phenomena participate in the relativity to which all human things are subject, and, on the other hand, that wherever, even on the lowest level, men rise above the world of sense to the idea of a higher, unifying power, some religious truth is revealed, we shall not be able to admit the existence of a specific opposition between natural and revealed religion, but are rather compelled to regard the entire history of religion as divine revelation, everywhere naturally communicated in the form of the human consciousness of God. 'Natural' and 'revealed,' therefore, are not two different kinds of religion, but the two aspects of every religion,—the one the divine principle and the other the human appearance. . . . From this point of view, it is true, every stage of religious and moral development has a relative right, in so far, namely, as it serves a useful purpose in its own place as a link in the evolution of the human race; however, not all forms have an equal right, but they are divided by essential differences. If the truth of a higher stage has become manifest, it brings to light the imperfection, and therefore the relative untruth of the lower stages, and these latter, no matter how long they may support themselves externally, are destined to disappear, or rather to be absorbed into the higher stage." Cfr. A. Sabatier, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion Based on Psychology and History*, (English tr.), New York, 1907, pp. 33 sqq.

The Modernist view that revelation and natural religion coincide in the emotional experience of the Absolute has been refuted in the first volume of this Handbook.²¹

To safeguard the character of supernatural revelation, two factors must be considered, namely: (1) the nature of human cognition, which excludes complete passivity in the conscious acceptance of truth, and (2) the absolute unchangeableness and infallibility of God.

3. *Supernatural revelation is possible with respect to the truths to be revealed.* In itself, every enrichment of human knowledge is a desirable good, and a truth is desirable in proportion as its possession benefits man in his everyday life. Therefore, truths upon which the well-being and perfection of human nature depend are to be valued more highly than such as are merely theoretical or indifferent. Now the truths of revelation furnish answers to precisely those questions which are of decisive importance for man's earthly existence. In addition, they acquaint him with his highest goal and show him the way to attain that goal, at the same time furnishing him, by virtue of their divine origin, with the best possible guaranty of absolute certitude. The communication of such truths, there-

²¹ Volume I, pp. 21 sqq., 186 sq.

fore, must be of the greatest conceivable benefit to humanity.

As the main objections that are raised against this thesis have been dealt with in a previous section, we can now proceed to consider the possibility of the revelation of mysteries.

2. Possibility of the Revelation of Mysteries

In establishing the possibility of supernatural revelation we have postulated that the truth which is to be revealed must be as yet unknown to the recipient. Under this supposition we showed supernatural revelation to be possible *quoad modum*. The question now arises whether a *substantially* supernatural revelation is possible; in other words, can God reveal mysteries to man? The Rationalists assert that He cannot. While they admit the possibility of the revelation of truths accessible to reason, they deny that God can communicate to man truths which transcend his understanding. To refute this contention, we must first explain what is meant by a mystery.

1. Definition of a Mystery

a) A mystery (from the Greek *μυστήριον*) is defined by Webster as a profound secret, some-

thing wholly unknown or kept cautiously concealed, and therefore exciting curiosity or wonder; something that has not been or cannot be explained. Every object of human knowledge involves a mystery, in so far as its nature or existence cannot be fully understood by unaided reason. In a narrower sense a mystery is anything which is beyond the reach of reason in the natural sphere of knowledge. To this category belong the physical essences of all material and spiritual objects, the future free acts of rational creatures, and the nature and existence of many things which are inaccessible to us on account of external obstacles, as, for example, the interior of the earth, the heavenly bodies, etc. All these belong to the order of nature and are consequently called *natural mysteries*.

b) *A supernatural mystery* in the strict theological sense is a truth which transcends the powers of human reason to such an extent that man cannot understand its essence or possibility even after it is revealed. God has revealed, for instance, the existence of the Trinity, but its innermost *raison d'être* and true nature remain a mystery to us. Therefore, this dogma is a mystery which exceeds the powers of reason (*supra rationem*). It is not unreasonable (*contra rationem*) because it does not contradict the

principles of human cognition, but neither is it rational (*secundum rationem*) because reason is not able fully to comprehend this truth and to bring it into harmony with the principles of philosophy. The mystery of the most Holy Trinity cannot be shown to be either in harmony with, or contrary to, human reason; it simply exceeds the powers of reason.

c) This does not, however, mean that there is nothing about this mystery that we can understand. We can gain a sufficient knowledge of it to be able to speak of it correctly in a limited way. We have some idea of the terms in which the mystery is presented to us; we know how these terms must be combined to form a logical judgment, and consequently are in a position to distinguish a correct definition of the mystery from a false one. Withal, however, our knowledge of the Divine Trinity remains very inadequate. The same is true of other mysteries of religion. In speaking, *e. g.*, of God's nature and personality, we constantly employ analogous terms; the innermost essence of God and the manner in which unity of essence and trinity of persons coexist in Him, remain hidden to our intellect.²²

²² See Pohle-Preuss, *God: His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes*, 5th ed., St. Louis, 1925; on the dogma of the Trinity in its

d) The subjoined argument applies only to supernatural mysteries in the strict sense of the term.

From the nature of a mystery, as defined above, it follows that we cannot demonstrate its possibility by means of positive arguments. We lack the necessary understanding of the concepts which must be combined in order to constitute the notion of a mystery, and, as a result, cannot form a reliable judgment as to the intrinsic interrelation of subject and predicate.

For precisely the same reason, on the other hand, the human intellect cannot demonstrate the impossibility of mysteries.²³

e) In ecclesiastical terminology, which forms the basis of the explanation just given, there corresponds to the English term "mystery" the Greek *μυστήριον*. Among the pagans this word denoted a religious rite to which only adepts were admitted, and which concealed doctrines that were supposed to ennoble this earthly life and to create belief in a future existence. Only a few privileged persons were admitted to these rites, and they were under a strict obligation of secrecy. To impress this obligation on the neo-relation to reason see Pohle-Preuss, *The Divine Trinity*, pp. 194-201, 5th ed., St. Louis, 1925.

²³ Ign. Ottiger, S.J., *Theologia Fundamentalis*, Vol. I, Freiburg, 1897, pp. 53 sqq.

phyte his mouth and eyes were bandaged during the ceremony of initiation. From *μύειν* = to close (mouth and eyes), to initiate into mysteries, comes the word *μυστήριον*.²⁴

This term was divested of its pagan connotations and adapted by the writers who, under divine inspiration, composed the Old and the New Testament. In the Old Testament *mysterium* is employed to designate a purely natural mystery, *e. g.*, a secret committed to some one, and also such truths, secrets or mysteries as can be revealed only by divine revelation, *e. g.*, the hidden meaning of a dream, and such as are founded on the very essence of God.²⁵ The New Testament employs *μυστήριον* in a more limited sense, namely, to denote those truths which can become known to man only by means of divine revelation and which remain obscure even after being revealed. The Evangelists employ this word only three times, namely, where they report Christ as declaring that it is given to the disciples alone to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.²⁶ The in-

²⁴ On the Biblical and classical meaning of *μυστήριον* see F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul*, tr. by J. F. Stoddard, Vol. II, London and New York, 1927, pp. 383 sqq.

²⁵ Prov. XX, 19; Eccles. XXII, 27; Dan. II, 18, 28 sq., 47; Wisd. II, 22; VI, 24.

²⁶ Matt. XIII, 11; Mark IV, 11; Luke VIII, 10.

comprehensibility of the revealed mysteries is even more plainly expressed by St. Paul. In Rom. XI, 25 the divine guidance of Israel is called a mystery, and the incomprehensibility of God's judgments is emphasized.²⁷

The Vulgate, besides *mysterium*, also employs the word *sacramentum*,²⁸ and though their derivation is different, uses the two terms synonymously. The fundamental meaning of *sacramentum* is a thing consecrated to the Deity, something sacred and holy, not something unknown or inscrutable. In the latter sense the word is first used by Tertullian, who probably found it in his Latin Bible.²⁹

f) In proving the possibility of the revelation of mysteries we do not, as noted above, employ the positive method, since this would be

²⁷ Cfr. F. Zorell, *Novi Testamenti Lexicon Graecum*, Paris, 1911, s. v.—Other pertinent texts are 1 Cor. II, 6 sqq.; XV, 51; Col. I, 26 sq.; 1 Tim. III, 9, 16; Apoc. I, 20; XVII, 7.

²⁸ E. g., Tob. XII, 7; Wisd. II, 22; VI, 24; Dan. II, 18; Eph. I, 9; III, 3, 9; Col. I, 27. Cfr. F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. II, p. 384; Pohle-Preuss, *The Sacraments*, Vol. I, pp. 5 sqq.

²⁹ Cfr. Prat, *op. cit.*, p. 385; A. Réville, *Du Sens du Mot Sacramentum dans Tertullien*, Paris, 1889; A. d'Alès, *La Théologie du Tertullien*, Paris, 1905, pp. 321-323; F. de Backer, *Sacramentum, le Mot et l'Idée dans . . . Tertullien*, Louvain, 1911; J. de Ghellinck *et al.*, *Pour l'Histoire du Mot "Sacramentum,"* Louvain, 1924.

effective only if we fully understood the matter revealed. We must content ourselves with showing that the supernatural revelation of a mystery involves no contradiction, and that it is consequently unreasonable to assert that a mystery cannot be the object of divine revelation. Our argument, therefore, will be mainly negative in character.

g) What we have said about the obscurity of mysteries applies, of course, only to our limited and imperfect human knowledge; for God, who is omniscient, there are no mysteries.

2. The Possibility of the Revelation of Mysteries an Article of Faith

The possibility of the revelation of mysteries is an article of faith defined by the Vatican Council as follows: "If anyone shall say that man cannot be raised by divine power to a higher than natural knowledge and perfection, but can and ought, by a continuous progress, to attain at length of himself to the possession of all that is true and good, let him be anathema."³⁰

³⁰ *Conc. Vat.*, Sess. III, *de Revelat.*, can. 3: "*Si quis dixerit, hominem ad cognitionem et perfectionem, quae naturalem superet, divinitus evehi non posse, sed ex seipso ad omnis tandem veri et boni possessionem iugi profectu pertingere posse et debere: anathema sit.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1808).

3. The Proposition Demonstrated

The supernatural divine revelation of mysteries involves no contradiction.

The proof of this thesis is based (1) on the nature of mysteries, (2) on their manifestation by God, and (3) on their reception by man.

The supernatural divine revelation of mysteries would be impossible only if it could be demonstrated that the existence of mysteries in God involved a contradiction, or that God could not communicate the knowledge of mysteries to men, or that men were incapable of receiving such knowledge when communicated. None of these propositions can be established. Therefore, the impossibility of the revelation of mysteries cannot be proved.

1. *The existence of mysteries in God involves no contradiction.* This is proved:

a) By the relation of human knowledge to the divine essence. The proper connatural object of the human intellect is suprasensible truth presented in sensible form. Such truths can in some instances be clearly and certainly known. But, as both experience and the authority of leading thinkers show, much remains mysterious and obscure. Even the most careful obser-

vation and the most ingenious experiments cannot solve every riddle. Thus science is still uncertain concerning the innermost essence of force, of magnetism, of electricity, and of light; it cannot tell what causes the mutual attraction of bodies, in what the essence of extension consists, how ideas are formed in the mind, what gives the imagination its power, and so forth. Yet these are all questions appertaining to the sphere of immediate, every-day experience. How much more pronounced must the weakness and deficiency of the human intellect be in more exalted spheres! How obscure in particular must the divine essence appear to us, since we can reach it only in a round-about way by means of ratiocination, by ascending from the consideration of visible creatures to the contemplation of their invisible Creator and Supreme Cause! How slight is the analogy between the palpable effect with all its imperfections and the infinitely perfect Cause! And, what makes our plight still worse, we are compelled to express the notion we form of the divine essence in inadequate terms, derived from the created universe. In view of this deficiency of human knowledge it is plainly unwarranted to assert that there can be nothing mysterious for us in God.

Our knowledge of the divine nature is too imperfect to justify us in passing a certain judgment on this point.

b) We arrive at a like conclusion by comparing human reason with the divine intellect. Men differ widely as to talents and intellectual proficiency. Where the intellect is less developed, there is little or no understanding for things which a more highly developed mind grasps without difficulty. But even the vast differences existing between human individuals appear small when compared with the difference that exists between the most highly developed human mind and the infinitely perfect divine Intellect. Both in power of cognition and in respect of its object the two are as far apart as the finite and the infinite. What the human mind is able to absorb from the infinitely rich content of the divine Intellect is so very little that we must regard it as a sign of folly and pride if a mere creature ventures to assert that God cannot possibly know anything that would constitute a mystery for the human mind.³¹

2. *The manifestation of mysteries by God to man does not involve a contradiction.* This appears without further argument from the analogy existing between the divine revelation of a

³¹ Cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I. I, c. 3.

mystery and the human communication of a truth which remains more or less obscure to the intellect even after it has been revealed. We meet with such communications every day, and there is no reason for assuming that they are beyond the power of God, whose knowledge infinitely transcends the limits of human understanding.

3. *It cannot be proved that man is incapable of receiving revealed mysteries from God.* Since a mystery is a truth which remains incomprehensible to the human mind even after it is revealed by God, an impossibility of receiving such a revelation on the part of man could only consist either in the fact that the truth communicated by revelation was absolutely beyond his comprehension, or that man was incapable of receiving anything that exceeded his power of cognition and holding it as true on the authority of another. Now, in the light of what we have said above, the incomprehensibility of a revealed mystery is not to be understood in this sense that it remains wholly incomprehensible after being revealed, and consequently represents for the human mind merely an empty form without a content. No; the mystery is partially unveiled through revelation and presented to the human intellect as an object of new knowl-

edge. On the other hand, the human intellect does not find it impossible or even difficult to accept as true on the authority of God something of which perhaps it understands but very little. Divine authority guarantees the truth of the revealed mystery and consequently human reason has nothing to fear in accepting it.³²

3. The Possibility of Mediate Revelation

Some moderate Rationalists deny the possibility of mediate revelation on the ground that it would be unbecoming for God to enter into communication with human individuals and reveal to them truths which they, in turn, are to make known to their fellowmen or to the human race as a whole. In the opinion of these writers all divine revelation must necessarily be immediate.

Divine revelation, according to Paul Sabatier, is immediate for all men, for the smallest children of the Kingdom of Heaven as well as for the greatest prophets, because God wishes to admit all men to His immediate personal communion.³³

Against this error we must prove the possi-

³² Cfr. J. H. Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 124-141.

³³ *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, N. Y., 1907, p. 63.

bility of *mediate* divine revelation. In doing so, however, we do not mean to assert that God, if He wished, could not reveal Himself directly to every human being. We admit this possibility, and are not at all inclined to dispute the assertion that such an immediate revelation would offer certain spiritual advantages which mediate revelation lacks. But this, as we shall show, is no reason for denying the possibility of mediate revelation.

In view of what we have said above, our argument for the possibility of mediate revelation may be limited to the new momenta here alleged on the part of God and on the part of man. It applies equally to modal and substantial revelation, both of which, as we shall see later, have actually taken place.

We assert, therefore, that **mediate revelation is possible**. Our proof for this thesis is based (1) on the essence of God and (2) on the nature of man.

1. *Mediate revelation is in conformity with the essence of God.* An earthly ruler has the right to promulgate his laws and ordinances through heralds or other agents. This right must belong *a fortiori* to God, who is the supreme Lord and Lawgiver. Nor does He lack the power to communicate His commands to others.

He knows the thoughts and wishes of men, has perfect control of all external circumstances, and hence can easily give the necessary inspiration and preserve revealed truths from being falsified and distorted. The omnipotent God must be able to safeguard the divine mission of His agents and the divine character of their message, even to secondary recipients. Finally, so far as God's wisdom and goodness are concerned, it may be admitted that the immediate instruction of every individual human being would be quite in keeping with these divine attributes, and even superior to mediate instruction, since by means of it, revelation could take place everywhere at the same time, and there would be less danger of anyone refusing to accept it. This admission, however, does not prove that mediate revelation is impossible. Every communication of supernatural truth, even when it is made through human organs, must be hailed as a valuable gift from God and cannot be rejected as unworthy of Him. If this or that individual refuses to listen to God's authorized representative, that is his own fault and loss. Those who, for some reason not involving guilt, do not receive the revelation thus mediately given, need not fear punishment, be-

cause God in His sanctity and justice permits no one to be lost without his own fault.

2. *Mediate divine revelation is in conformity with the nature of man.* The herald of divine revelation can communicate to his fellowmen, not only all natural, but also the supernatural truths revealed to him by God, and no one is hindered from receiving such a communication. History teaches that men have always shown themselves amenable to religious instruction, no matter whether that instruction came mediately through human agents or directly from God Himself.

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CHAPTER II

THE NECESSITY OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

1. Having demonstrated the possibility of supernatural revelation, we have now to examine the question of its necessity. We do this, not for the purpose of concluding from the necessity of revelation to its actual existence, as Sabatier charges,¹ but to disprove the Rationalist contention that the revelation of religious truths ascertainable by unaided reason is superfluous² and to demonstrate the great advantage and utility of supernatural revelation.

2. If revelation is necessary, the reason for its necessity must lie either with God or with man. Revelation cannot be necessary for God because it is an operation *ad extra*, and therefore a free-will act, and the perfection of God cannot depend on something existing outside the divine essence. Hence, if we speak of revelation as necessary, we mean that it is necessary for man.

¹ A. Sabatier, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 44 sqq.

² Cfr. Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1807.

3. In order to determine this point more accurately, we must distinguish between absolute and moral necessity, and ascertain whether man's ultimate destiny is purely natural or supernatural.

4. If man were created for a purely natural end, revelation could not be said to be necessary for him, since nature must be adequately equipped by its Creator to attain all its essential aims and purposes. There might at most be a moral necessity, in so far as revelation served to aid man in reaching his final goal with greater security and ease. But, as a matter of fact, man's goal is *supernatural*, and hence the necessity of revelation is absolute, because without it man would not be able either to reach that goal or to recognize the means necessary for the purpose.

5. We are here concerned only with the necessity of revelation for the knowledge of the natural truths of religion. We maintain that revelation is morally necessary to enable man to know the truths of natural religion, and in taking this attitude we reject, on the one hand, Traditionalism, which regards this necessity as absolute,³ and, on the other, Rationalism, which positively denies this necessity.

³ *Ibid.*, n. 1622 sqq.; 1649 sqq.

§ I. THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

The teaching of the Church concerning the necessity of revelation is contained in the following declaration of the Vatican Council: "This is to be ascribed to divine revelation, that such truths among things divine as are not of themselves beyond human reason, can in the present condition of mankind be known by all with facility, with certain assurance, and with no admixture of error. This, however, is not the reason why revelation is absolutely necessary; but because God in His infinite goodness has ordained man to a supernatural end, namely, to share in divine blessings which utterly exceed the human understanding; for 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.'"⁴

And again: "If anyone shall say that it is

⁴ *Conc. Vat.*, Sess. III, cap. 2, *De Revelat.* (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1786): "*Huic divinae revelationi tribuendum quidem est, ut ea, quae in rebus divinis humanae rationi per se impervia non sunt, in praesenti quoque generis humanae conditione ab omnibus expedite, firma certitudine et nullo admixto errore cognosci possint. Non hac tamen de causa revelatio absolute necessaria dicenda est, sed quia Deus ex infinita bonitate sua ordinavit hominem ad finem supernaturalem, ad participanda scilicet bona divina, quae humanae mentis intelligentiam omnino superant; si quidem oculus non vidit, nec auris audiivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae preparavit Deus illis, qui diligunt eum.*"

impossible or inexpedient that man should be taught by divine revelation concerning God and the worship to be paid to Him; let him be anathema.”⁵

And: “If anyone shall say that man cannot be raised by divine power to a higher than natural knowledge and perfection, but that by himself he can and ought by continuous progress to attain at length to the possession of all that is true and good; let him be anathema.”⁶

§ II. PROOF FOR THE NECESSITY OF MODALLY SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

After mankind had become generally addicted to Polytheism, supernatural revelation was morally necessary to ensure a relatively perfect and certain knowledge of the truths of natural religion on the part of the generality of men.

1. We assert the necessity of *modally* super-

⁵ *Conc. Vat.*, Sess. III, *De Revelat.*, can. 2 (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1807): “*Si quis dixerit, fieri non posse aut non expedire, ut per revelationem divinam homo de Deo cultuque ei exhibendo doceatur: anathema sit.*”

⁶ *Conc. Vat.*, Sess. III, *De Revelat.*, can. 3 (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1808): “*Si quis dixerit, hominem ad cognitionem et perfectionem, quae naturalem superet, divinitus evehi non posse, sed ex se ipso ad omnis tandem veri et boni possessionem iugi profectu pertingere posse et debere: anathema sit.*”

natural revelation, and this only on the assumption of the general spread of Polytheism and the consequent decay of religion and morals.

2. We have in view here, not human nature in the abstract, but man as he actually is, in his present condition, and we are not now concerned about the causes of that condition.

3. The phrase "relatively perfect and certain knowledge" in our thesis implies that some sort of imperfect knowledge of religious truths is morally possible even without revelation. We speak of the knowledge of natural religion, not of the attainment of man's natural end, which could be reached even with an imperfect knowledge of the truths in question.

4. Our thesis refers only to those natural truths which correspond to man's natural end and destiny, such as the spirituality and immortality of the soul, the existence of God and of the moral law of nature, at least in its principal requirements.

5. We assert the necessity of revelation for mankind as a whole, in order that a relatively perfect knowledge of natural religion might become general. Room is left for individual exceptions to this rule.

Proof. Supernatural revelation must be regarded as morally necessary in the sense

indicated, if a relatively perfect and certain knowledge of the truths of natural religion is morally impossible without it. This, as history and experience teach, is actually the case. Therefore, supernatural revelation is morally necessary.

We base the moral necessity of revelation for the knowledge of the truths of natural religion on the moral impossibility of acquiring this knowledge without revelation. "Necessary" and "impossible," as well as "morally necessary" and "morally impossible" are correlative terms. *Necessary* is that without which something—a being, a state, the performance of a task—would be impossible. A thing is *morally necessary* if without it a task would be so difficult that it would not be performed under normal conditions. In this sense we assert the necessity of supernatural revelation for a relatively certain and clear knowledge of the truths of natural religion on the part of the whole of mankind under actually existing conditions. We do *not* assert the physical necessity of revelation, but assume that, absolutely speaking, man's natural powers and faculties, even in his present state, would suffice to furnish him with a relatively clear and certain knowledge of the truths in question. If he did not possess the faculties re-

quired for this purpose, we should have to admit that the Creator failed to equip human nature with the means necessary for attaining the end for which it was created,—which would be incompatible with His wisdom and goodness and involve a contradiction.

The moral necessity of supernatural Revelation becomes plainly evident when we consider the religious and moral condition of the pagan nations of antiquity and study the natural ways and means which they had at their disposal to improve that condition. It will be sufficient for our present purpose to call attention to a few outstanding facts. At the period in question the idea of God had lost its influence upon the religious life of men. Pristine Monotheism had been relegated to the background and was discernible only in vague outline. In its place Polytheism, Pantheism, and Dualism held undisputed sway. Human weaknesses and vices were quite generally attributed to the different gods of the pagan pantheon, scandalous stories were told concerning some of them. The worship rendered to the gods was in conformity with the belief which people entertained about their character. Sexual immorality, cruel sacrifices, even of human lives, and intemperance were employed as means of currying the divine

favor. The moral life of the people was modeled upon what they believed to be the example of their gods. These things were not merely tolerated, but enjoyed the patronage of the civil authorities, who, together with the priests and philosophers, were the champions and promoters of immorality.⁷

Under such conditions it was impossible for pagans to acquire clear ideas on the subject of natural religion. There were only two ways which might have led them to that goal, namely, personal study and investigation and formal instruction, for which they had a right to look to their philosophers; but in matter of fact both these ways were closed to them.

The ancient pagans were unable to arrive at a knowledge of the truths of natural religion by personal study and enquiry. It is by no means easy to obtain a clear and accurate knowledge of these truths, since they demand serious study, for which some men have no talent, whilst others lack the time or inclination. An aggravating circumstance in the case of the ancient pagans lay in the false beliefs with which they were imbued. Hence, but few of them were able

⁷ Abundant proofs for these assertions *apud* J. J. I. Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew in the Courts of the Temple of Christ*, tr. by N. Darnell, 2 vols., 2nd ed., London, 1906.

to arrive at a knowledge of the truths of natural religion, and even these few needed much leisure and a long time to complete their investigations. All, even the wisest, were subject to manifold errors. Hence it is not too much to say that it was morally—nay, to some extent even physically—impossible for any nation, and for the human race at large, to acquire this knowledge by purely natural means.⁸

Nor could the pagans of classical antiquity gain a knowledge of these truths from their teachers, for

a) The heathen philosophers did not try to change the religious opinions of the people. Cicero says that philosophy was content with a few bald notions and exercised no influence whatever upon the masses, whom it purposely ignored.⁹ Horace penned the cruel line:

*"Odi profanum vulgus et arceo."*¹⁰

If the learned men of antiquity had a truer conception of religion than the masses of the people, they did not show it by their conduct, but shared the current religious superstitions and practices. Plato wished to see in his ideal republic no other religion than that of the father-

⁸ St. Thomas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, l. I, c. 4.

⁹ *Quaest. Tusc.*, II, c. 1.

¹⁰ *Odes*, III, 1, 1.

land.¹¹ Cicero demanded that no change be made in the sacrifices offered to the various gods.¹² Epictetus says that sacrifices should be offered to the gods according to paternal custom and tradition, with a pure intention and all due respect.¹³

b) The pagan philosophers of antiquity were unable to offer their followers any real certitude in religious matters because they were themselves in doubt on most important points of belief. Socrates' teaching on the nature of the deity was flagrantly inconsistent. On one occasion he asked his hearers to renounce all efforts to know the gods, and to be content with believing that they ruled the world according to their good pleasure,¹⁴ whilst on another occasion he attributed to them omniscience and omnipresence¹⁵ and prayed to the rising sun.¹⁶ Cicero called the nature of the gods "a difficult and obscure question" and declared that the opinions of the wisest men differed so widely on this subject that the Academicians had prudently refrained

¹¹ *De Republica*, l. iv.

¹² *De Leg.*, l. II: "*Iam illud ex institutis pontificum et haruspicum non mutandum est, quibus hostiis immolandum cuique deo.*"

¹³ *Enchir.*, c. 31.

¹⁴ Xenophon, *Symp.*, c. vi, 65, 7.

¹⁵ Xenophon, *Mem.*, I, 1, 19.

¹⁶ Plato, *Symp.*, 36.

from espousing any of them.¹⁷ Aristotle described God as a simple, perfect being, who is happy in contemplating himself, but exercises no influence whatever on the outside world and is utterly indifferent to the doings of men.¹⁸ Plato taught that matter is eternal and exists independently of God.¹⁹ Cicero, after quoting various theories concerning the human soul, says that nobody can tell which of them is true, and the dispute promises to be unending.²⁰

The *ethical teaching* of the pagan philosophers of antiquity is equally unsatisfactory. On many points they merely re-echoed the current opinions of the masses, which were quite frequently on a low plane. Under these circumstances it is not surprising to hear Cicero voice distrust of all philosophical schools²¹ and declare that there is hardly any religious opinion,

¹⁷ *De Natura Deorum*, l. I, c. 1: "*Perdifficilis et perobscura est quaestio de natura deorum. De qua tam variae sunt doctissimorum hominum tamque discrepantes sententiae, ut magno argumento esse debeat, causam esse inscientiam prudenterque Academicos a rebus tam incertis assensionem cohibuisse.*"

¹⁸ Cfr. E. Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, Vol. II, Part 2, 3rd ed., Leipsic, 1879, pp. 375 sqq.

¹⁹ Cfr. Zeller, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Part 1, 5th ed., pp. 747 sqq.

²⁰ *Disp. Tuscul.*, l. I, c. 11: "*Harum sententiarum quae vera sit, deus aliquis viderit: quae verisimillima, magna quaestio est.*"

²¹ *Disp. Tuscul.*, III, c. 28: "*Quid? Ex ceteris philosophis nonne optimus et gravissimus quisque confitetur multa se ignorare, multa sibi etiam atque etiam esse discenda?*"

no matter how absurd, that has not been espoused by some thinker.²² The ancient philosophers were unable to instruct the masses in religion because they did not know the truth, and some of them openly admitted their ignorance. In the dialogue "Alcibiades," which was formerly attributed to Plato, but is now believed to be the work of some other writer of the pre-Christian era, it is stated: "We must, therefore, wait, until some one comes to show us how to conduct ourselves towards the gods and towards our fellowmen."²³

It is quite evident from what we have said that, without supernatural revelation, a clear and certain knowledge of the truths of natural religion was impossible, and hence supernatural revelation was a moral necessity for the generality of mankind. This necessity, which we have thus shown to exist for the highly cultured nations of classical antiquity, must be maintained *a fortiori* for all those pagan nations and tribes which were intellectually less developed and morally perhaps even more deeply steeped in vice than the Greeks and Romans.²⁴

²² *De Divinat.*, l. II, c. 58: "*Nescio, quomodo nihil tam absurde dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo philosophorum.*"

²³ *Alcibiades*, II, 13.

²⁴ Cfr. W. Schneider, *Die Naturvölker*, Paderborn and Münster, 1885-86; B. C. A. Windle, *On Miracles*, London, 1924, pp. 104 sqq.

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CHAPTER III

THE KNOWABILITY OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

In the preceding two chapters we have demonstrated the possibility and necessity of supernatural revelation. Before we approach the question whether God actually revealed Himself to mankind, we must inquire how the existence or the reality of a supernatural revelation can become known to man. It is evident that if God deigns to reveal Himself, men must be able to receive that revelation and be aware of its divine provenience. For a supernatural revelation that would not be knowable as such would be useless, and a useless revelation would contradict the wisdom of God.

The means by which the divine origin of revelation can be ascertained and true distinguished from false revelation, are called *criteria* (κριτήριον, from κρίνειν, to separate, to sift) or *notes* of revelation (*notae revelationis*). They are also termed motives of credibility (*motiva credibilitatis*) because they supply the human intellect with reasons for regarding the revealer as

worthy of belief and his communication as credible (*iudicium credibilitatis*). The judgment thus formed, when there is question of mediate revelation, concerns first of all the human witnesses who announce the revelation. Thus the fact that there has been a revelation, and the content of that revelation, become credible, *i. e.*, we hold it reasonable to believe a witness when he asserts that God has communicated something to him for our information. This belief leads to the final persuasion that it is reasonable to accept the truths revealed on the authority of God.

The so-called criteria of revelation have reference mainly to the first announcement of the revealed doctrine or doctrines. Once the divine origin of revelation is established with certainty, this suffices for all time.

In this chapter we will deal, first, with the criteria of revelation in general, and, secondly, with the two most important of these criteria, miracles and prophecies.

§ I. THE CRITERIA OF REVELATION IN GENERAL

I. Definition of a Criterion

1. As divine revelation itself (assuming it to exist), and as its eventual human agent, so, too,

the selection of definite criteria by which revealed truths may be known with certainty, depends upon God's free choice. *Per se* men would be obliged to believe any human witness who claimed to have received a communication from God, as soon as his natural credibility was well established. Therefore, it is only from revealed documents (the historical authenticity of which will be demonstrated presently) that we can ascertain which criteria were provided by God. In other words, the criteria of revelation, like the concept of revelation itself, must be sought for in the Bible. Reason is able to suggest only the properties which every general criterion must possess, and which consequently must be found also in the criteria of supernatural revelation.

Hence we may define *a criterion of revelation as an objective, generally valid and certain mark or note accompanying revelation, and attesting its supernatural, divine origin.*

a) Such a criterion must *inhere in supernatural revelation*, because it is through it that human reason is to obtain a certain knowledge of the supernatural origin of the doctrines revealed. This lies in the nature of things, for it is through the criteria that we are led to know the divine origin of a revelation, and conse-

quently the latter must somehow be connected with the former, which relationship postulates a close connection between the two.

b) Such a criterion must, moreover, be *objective*, for purely subjective criteria (*e. g.*, emotion, taste, pleasure, etc.) are unreliable guides, and man may feel himself greatly drawn towards a doctrine which does not in the least correspond to divine revelation.

c) Such a criterion must, furthermore, be *generally valid*. All men are expected to recognize revelation by this sign or note, and hence the criterion itself must be so clear, plain, and easily intelligible that it will convince every intelligent man, regardless of his degree of culture. When there are several criteria, it will suffice if some of them clearly indicate the divine origin of the revelation. The one or the other may demand greater learning for its application; but the majority must be sufficiently simple to permit of a sure judgment even by the unlettered.

d) Finally, a criterion must be *certain*, that is, it must furnish reliable evidence of the supernatural, divine origin of revelation. As there is question here mainly of historical facts, we must not expect metaphysical or physical, but in most cases be content with moral certitude, which excludes all reasonable doubt.

2. Division of the Criteria of Revelation and their Evidential Value

a) The criteria of revelation are partly internal, partly external. The former are furnished by revelation itself, whilst the latter are historical facts which, though really distinct from the revealed truths, have an external connection with them, in so far as they accompany, precede, or follow them.

b) Both kinds of criteria are *expressly mentioned in Sacred Scripture*. The external criteria occur in John V, 36, where Christ says: "For the works which the Father hath given me to perfect; the works themselves, which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me."¹ Also in John V, 39, where the Saviour declares: "Search ye the scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of me."² The internal criteria are mentioned in John VII, 17: "If any man will do the will of him [*i. e.*, my Father], he shall know of the doctrine,

¹ John V, 36: "*Opera enim, quae dedit mihi Pater, ut perficiam ea, ipsa opera, quae ego facio, testimonium perhibent de me, quia Pater misit me.*"

² John V, 39: "*Scrutamini scripturas, quia vos putatis in ipsis vitam aeternam habere, et illae sunt, quae testimonium perhibent de me.*"

whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”³

c) Both the internal and the external criteria of revelation may in turn be negative or positive. The *negative criteria* enable us to know that there is no obstacle in the way of accepting the divine origin of a doctrine, or that such an origin is possible. If these negative criteria are wanting, the revelation cannot be divine. The *positive criteria* show, at least in their *ensemble*, that the revealed doctrine actually comes from God. That some of the positive criteria do not furnish complete certitude, but merely a greater or less degree of probability, does not detract from their value; though insufficient in themselves, they can be utilized with profit to supplement the others.

1. The Internal Criteria of Revelation

a) The internal criteria of revelation are the *inherent truth, purity, and sublimity of the doctrines revealed*. A negative interior criterion of the divine origin of a doctrine is based upon the certainty that no revealed truth can contradict the evidence of reason, and that divinely

³ John VII, 17: “*Si quis voluerit voluntatem eius [scil. Patris] facere, cognoscat de doctrina, utrum ex Deo sit, an ego a me ipso loquar.*”

revealed truths cannot contradict one another. In applying this criterion to revelation, the known truths of reason serve as a standard, and it is—doubtless with full justice—assumed that a communication from God, the Creator of man, cannot possibly contradict human reason. The absence of contradictions, thus established—aside from suprarational truths or mysteries—is an indication of the truth of the doctrine under consideration. That doctrine may, therefore, be revealed by God. Whether it has actually been revealed, still remains to be shown. But if the alleged revelation contains contradictions, this is *a priori* evidence that it cannot come from God.

b) The negative internal criterion just described may co-exist with positive interior marks or notes indicating the divine provenience of a doctrine. These notes are present if the revealed doctrine is so perfect, pure, and sublime that it can hardly be credited to human sources. When this is the case, there is a probability of divine revelation. There would be a great probability of supernatural revelation if the natural truths of religion were clearly and perfectly set forth in an alleged revelation, for the difficulties of attaining this goal by purely natural means are so great as to constitute a moral impossibility

for the individual as well as for mankind at large. We say, a moral, not a physical impossibility, since the truths in question are not *per se* inaccessible to human reason. Consequently, we would not, in our case, be justified in assuming the fact of a supernatural revelation with physical certitude. But if, in addition to the natural truths of religion, the revealed doctrine would also contain answers to questions which are of supreme importance to mankind, such as the origin and forgiveness of sin, man's fate after death, etc.—answers far superior to any ever offered before, and perfectly consonant with the intrinsic needs of human nature—then there would be more than a moral certainty that the alleged revelation was really and truly supernatural and divine.⁴

2. The External Criteria of Revelation

a) The external criteria of revelation are: *the character of the witnesses, the spread and effects of the revealed doctrine, miracles, and prophecies.*

⁴ Cfr. J. Kleutgen, S.J., *Theologie der Vorzeit*, Vol. IV, 2nd ed., n. 203. Kleutgen, following Suarez, makes the effectiveness of this criterion depend on divine grace. The philosophical and psychologic material it embodies is insufficient to give certainty. "Moral certainty" appears an ambiguous term here. Does it mean "more than probability" (surely it does), or metaphysical certitude? (This is evidently not intended.)

b) Here, too, we may speak of negative criteria. If the witness, *i. e.*, the first herald of the alleged revelation, is an honest, but ordinary mortal; if the spread and the religious and moral effects of the revealed doctrine can be explained naturally and without a violation of the moral law; it is proper to conclude that the revelation may possibly be of divine origin. If, on the other hand, the herald of the alleged revelation is a vicious, immoral man, it is highly improbable that his message should be supernatural. For although, absolutely speaking, God could make use of wicked men as His messengers, it is unreasonable to assume that, in revealing a doctrine for the first time and establishing a religion, He should employ agents who must appear suspect and unworthy of such an exalted mission.

c) If the doctrine alleged to be revealed tends *per se* to destroy virtue and morality, and if it is propagated by violence, fraud, or other immoral means, we may safely conclude that it is not from God.

d) Positive external marks of the divine origin of a doctrine are: the eminently virtuous life led by the bearer of that doctrine, the beneficial effects produced by it, and its singularly rapid expansion. When all these factors co-

operate, the doctrine in question is most probably divinely revealed.

e) If, in addition, the extraordinary effects of the doctrine and its rapid expansion, as well as the transcendent moral greatness of its protagonist, can be explained only by supernatural divine aid, then every reasonable doubt in the divine origin of the doctrine must vanish.

f) The decisive factors in establishing the divine character of revelation are the external positive criteria of miracles and prophecies, through which God Himself bears witness to the truth and the divine origin of the revealed doctrines.

3. The Evidential Value of the Criteria of Revelation

a) The negative criteria are not sufficient to establish the divine origin of a doctrine, but they may aid in discerning a doctrine which pretends to be supernaturally revealed, but in reality does not come from God.

b) Among the positive criteria of revelation, broadly speaking, those known as external deserve to rank above those called internal, for the reason that they accomplish their purpose with greater certainty, rapidity, and ease.

a) The external criteria allow us to perceive

the divine origin of revelation *with greater certainty*. For while the positive internal criteria, under certain conditions, may also generate certitude, they can exert this effect only on those who are enabled by education and experience properly to evaluate the revealed doctrine. On the other hand, there is danger that the evaluation of a revealed doctrine, especially in regard to its sublimity and its capacity for satisfying the innermost needs of man, may be entirely too subjective. The positive external criteria, on the contrary, can be appreciated by all, even the ignorant and unlettered, because they rest upon historical facts which are easy to ascertain. For the same reason (namely, because there is question of objective facts) the danger of deception is practically excluded.

β) The external criteria allow us to perceive the divine origin of revelation *with greater facility*. In applying them, it is sufficient to investigate a few historical data, whereas the application of the internal criteria demands a careful analysis of the *ensemble* of the doctrines said to be revealed. The more varied and comprehensive the subject-matter to be examined, the easier it is for error to creep in.

γ) The external criteria enable us to perceive the divine origin of revelation *more quickly*.

This follows from the fact that, instead of the many truths which constitute the subject-matter of revelation, only one needs to be considered, namely, the question of divine origin, which can be demonstrated with certainty by the application of the external criteria. In the end everything depends on the credibility of the witness and the origin of his message.

c) From what we have said it follows that, as a general rule, the external criteria of revelation are preferable to the internal;—which does not, however, mean that the latter are of no value. On the contrary, the more carefully they are applied, the more clearly will the sublimity, beauty, and divine character of a revealed doctrine manifest itself. At times it may even become necessary to employ the internal instead of the external criteria. This would be the case, *e. g.*, if we were compelled to demonstrate the divine origin of revelation against opponents who are either prejudiced against the external criteria or regard the revealed doctrines themselves as contradictions. Since, however, the apologetical demonstration of the Catholic religion is primarily intended for those who already accept the divine origin of revelation, and have revered and loved it from childhood, there is no reason why we should evaluate the criteria

of revelation otherwise than in the light of their objective validity.

d) Among the positive external criteria of revelation the most important are *miracles* and *prophecies*. The Vatican Council teaches: "In order that the obedience of our faith might be in harmony with reason, God willed that to the interior help of the Holy Spirit should be joined exterior proofs of His revelation, to wit, divine facts, and especially miracles and prophecies, which, as they manifestly display the omnipotence and infinite knowledge of God, are most certain proofs of His divine revelation, adapted to the intelligence of all men." ⁵ And again: "If anyone shall say that divine revelation cannot be made credible by outward signs, and therefore that men ought to be moved to faith solely by the internal experience of each, or by private inspiration; let him be anathema." ⁶

⁵ *Conc. Vat.*, Sess. III, c. 3 (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1790): "*Ut nihilominus fidei nostrae obsequium rationi consentaneum esset, voluit Deus cum internis Spiritus Sancti auxiliis externa iungi revelationis suae argumenta, facta scilicet divina atque imprimis miracula et prophetias, quae cum Dei omnipotentiam et infinitam scientiam luculenter commonstrent, divinae revelationis signa sunt certissima et omnium intelligentiae accommodata.*" (Cfr. Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione*, II, 103.)

⁶ Sess. III, can. 3: "*Si quis dixerit, revelationem divinam externis signis credibilem fieri non posse, ideoque sola interna cuiusque experientia aut inspiratione privata homines ad fidem moveri debere: anathema sit.*"

§ II. MIRACLES

The most prominent criteria of divine revelation are miracles and prophecies. These we shall now study in some detail. We begin with miracles, their definition, division, possibility, knowability, and evidential force.

I. Definition and Division

1. Definition of a Miracle

A) *Derivation of the Word*.—The word miracle is derived from the Latin *miraculum*, which, in turn, comes from *mirari*, to wonder. Etymologically, therefore, a miracle is a wonderful or marvelous event. The theological use of the term can be more exactly defined only in the light of revelation itself. Sacred Scripture employs various expressions to designate the idea here under discussion: *signum*, *portentum*,⁷ *ostentum*,⁸ *mirabile*,⁹ *virtus*,¹⁰ *prodigium*.¹¹ A miracle is always an extraordinary and astounding demonstration of divine power. Very often it is expressly described as a characteristic mark

⁷ *i. e.*, sign (Is. XX, 3).

⁸ *τέρας*, *i. e.*, something extraordinary (Ex. IV, 21).

⁹ *i. e.*, something astounding (Ex. XV, 11).

¹⁰ *δύναμις*, *i. e.*, a display or proof of power (Matt. VII, 22).

¹¹ *i. e.*, a prodigy (*τέρας*), as in Ps. CIV, 27.

of the supernatural mission of a person or the divine origin of a doctrine.¹²

B) *Essential Elements of a Miracle*.—According to the teaching of divine revelation, every miracle contains four distinct elements, which, taken together, constitute its essence. A miracle is (a) an extraordinary phenomenon, which (b) transcends the powers of nature, (c) is traceable to God as its author, and (d) serves a good purpose.

a) A miracle is *an extraordinary phenomenon*.

a) A miracle is a phenomenon which occurs in the natural sphere, but transcends the order of nature, and cannot, therefore, be ascribed to nature's powers or subjected to her laws.

In spite of the use of the word "extraordinary," a miracle need not necessarily be an absolutely rare phenomenon, though in comparison with the phenomena of nature it will always be exceptional. At times (*e. g.*, during the life of Christ and His Apostles) miracles have been quite numerous.

β) In order to come within the scope of the notion of a miracle, the phenomenon must be-

¹² Cfr. Ex. IV, 1 sqq.; Jos. III, 7 sqq.; Judges VI, 13 sqq.; Matt. IX, 6; XII, 22 sqq.; Mark II, 5 sqq.; XVI, 17; Luke VII, 22; John II, 18; V, 36; IX, 30; XIV, 11 sqq.; X, 25; XV, 24; XX, 30; 1 Cor. XV, 14; 1 Pet. I, 3, 21.

long to the physical or natural order; an event in the supernatural order or even in the supra-sensible order is not considered by most Catholic theologians as *technically* a miracle. These phenomena are physically verifiable. The conversion of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the operation of the Sacraments, and the continued creation of human souls are not, strictly speaking, miracles. Nor was the creation of the world a miracle, for the order of nature did not yet exist when God called the universe into being by His omnipotent *fiat*.

b) A miracle represents *an effect which transcends the powers of nature, i. e.,* the physical forces, material and mental, of which we have ordinary experience in this life.¹³

a) An apparition that can be satisfactorily explained as resulting from the powers of nature is a natural phenomenon and cannot, therefore, be classed as a miracle. We do not, however, mean to say that a miracle must transcend the powers of nature in every respect. There are phenomena which *per se* (*ratione sui* or *quoad substantiam*) transcend the powers of nature,

¹³ Cfr. Jos. Rickaby, S.J., *God and His Creatures*, London, 1905, p. 265.

e. g., the mutual penetration of bodies; there are others which transcend the powers of nature only in regard to the subject in which they inhere (*quoad subiectum*), *e. g.*, the raising of a dead body to life; nature, too, can produce life, but not in a corpse. Finally, there are phenomena which are supernatural only as to the manner of their origin (*miracula quoad modum*), *e. g.*, the sudden cure of a fever which could have been gradually healed by natural means.

β) This distinction, which is luminously explained in the two *Summae* of Aquinas, agrees substantially with the division of miracles into supernatural, contranatural, and preternatural, found in the Thomistic treatise *De Potentia*.¹⁴ Supernatural miracles are effects which completely transcend the powers of nature; those contrary to nature (*contra naturam*) are phenomena which run counter to the natural character of the thing with which they are connected, as when a man walks upon the water; preternatural miracles conform fully to those phenomena which are supernatural only in the manner of their occurrence (*quoad modum*).

C) *God is the sole cause of every miracle*, but

¹⁴ *Summa Theologica*, Ia, qu. 105, art. 8; *Summa contra Gentiles*, l. III, c. 101; *De Potentia*, qu. VI, art. 2, ad 3.

this fact by no means excludes the instrumentality of angels¹⁵ or men, who by their prayers can exert a moral influence towards the working of a miracle or co-operate with God as instrumental causes in producing miraculous effects.

a) The activity of the angels may extend even farther. Among the miracles reported in Sacred Scripture there are many which an angel could perform by means of his natural powers. If we had to limit the criteria of revelation to miracles that can be traced to the immediate action of God, and could admit only a moral or instrumental co-operation on the part of creatures, there would be very few miracles which could be used as evidence, for all those phenomena which an angel is able to produce by his own power would have to be eliminated. This position would render the argument from miracles rather precarious and run counter to the teaching of the Bible, which designates as miracles many phenomena that do not exceed the natural powers of the angels. Hence, it seems more appropriate not to narrow the definition of a miracle so as to limit it to phenomena which ab-

¹⁵ The existence of the angels is known to us only from revelation. We here mention them, as well as the evil spirits, hypothetically, that is to say, *if* there are such beings, and in so far as our opponents admit their existence. (Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God the Author of Nature and the Supernatural*, pp. 308 sqq.)

solutely transcend the powers of created nature, but, following the example of Benedict XIV,¹⁶ to extend the term to phenomena which, though they transcend the forces of nature, do not exceed the ordinary powers of the angels. St. Thomas's definition of a miracle as something that happens beyond the order of all created nature,¹⁷ would in that case no longer apply to all miracles in general, but only to a limited class, namely, those called absolute; all others would be strictly relative.

b) Every true miracle, therefore, must transcend at least the known powers of nature. Whether its immediate cause is God Himself or an angel, is a question that need not detain us here, since it is evident that a good angel will always act in conformity with the divine will.

But there is another question to which attention must be called, namely, whether the effect produced may not be the work of demons. The evil spirits are undoubtedly able, by their purely natural powers, to produce effects which nature, such as we know it from our limited experience, cannot produce. For the correct eval-

¹⁶ *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Beatorum Canonizatione*, l. IV, pars. 1, c. 1 and 6.

¹⁷ *Summa Theologica*, 1a, qu. 110, art. 4.

uation of such effects it is, therefore, necessary to study the phenomena themselves, their accompanying circumstances, and, above all, the purpose for which the alleged miracle is wrought, and never to lose sight of the principle that God in His wisdom and holiness can not possibly allow the demons to produce effects which a prudent man would unhesitatingly ascribe to divine or angelic intervention, since it would otherwise be impossible for mankind to escape pernicious errors.

D) Every true miracle must serve *a definite good purpose*. God in His wisdom cannot act without a purpose, and His perfection does not permit that purpose to be anything but good. A miracle cannot have for its object something that is morally bad, for God is infinitely holy. Nor can a miracle aim at improving the physical order of nature, with a view to correct some defect in the original scheme of creation. This would be incompatible with the omniscience and wisdom of the Creator. Broadly speaking, therefore, every miracle, being a manifestation of the divine sovereignty and omnipotence, must by its very nature serve to promote the glory of God. Besides this general purpose, there may be other special purposes for which miracles are wrought, such as: (a) The mani-

festation of the divine presence;¹⁸ (b) the authentication of genuine messengers of God;¹⁹ (c) the healing of diseases or other services rendered to humanity;²⁰ (d) the punishment of human misdeeds.²¹

E) In the light of these explanations we can now broadly define a miracle as an extraordinary effect which exceeds at least the known powers of nature and can be traced to a divine cause.

a) We here employ the term "divine cause" in its wider sense, as including the angels. The purpose of a miracle is not mentioned because the definition is intended to comprise all miracles, and, on account of the divine causality involved, every miracle must necessarily be good.

b) *As a criterion of revelation a miracle is an extraordinary effect exceeding at least the known powers of nature, traceable to a divine cause, perceptible by the senses, and serving as an argument or proof for the divine origin of revelation.* This definition contains two new marks, of which the one mentions a special prop-

¹⁸ Gen. XXVIII, 12 sq.; Job XXXVIII,; Ez. I; Matt. III, 16 sq.; John XII, 28; Acts II, 2 sqq.

¹⁹ Cfr. the passages quoted above.

²⁰ Gen. XVII, 16; 4 Kings II, 21; Matt. IV, 23 sq.; Acts III, 7.

²¹ Gen. XIX, 24; Ex. VII-XII; Acts V, 5 sqq.

erty of the miraculous phenomenon, while the other connects it with revelation. A miracle, to be available as argument or proof, must be a phenomenon which is *perceptible by the senses*, because it is intended to serve as a means of accrediting a divine messenger among men, who are not able to observe whatever miraculous processes may be taking place in that messenger's soul. The purpose of a miracle, *to serve as a proof for the divine origin of revelation*, is expressly mentioned in this definition because it does not follow from the nature of a miracle as such, and because only a miracle that has been wrought expressly for this purpose can be employed as a criterion of divine revelation. Were this not so, there would be no necessary connection between the miracle and the revelation of which it is a criterion. If this connection is not made expressly by a reference to the miracle, on the part of God or of the human witness, it must at least be plainly discernible from the accompanying circumstances.

c) An extraordinary effect which transcends the known powers of nature, but is not traceable to a divine cause, is called a *pseudo-miracle*. Many such pseudo-miracles are mentioned in Sacred Scripture.²² To distinguish them from

²² Deut. XIII, 1-3; Jer. XXIII, 32; Matt. XXIV, 24; Mark XIII, 21 sq.; 2 Thess. II, 8-11; Acts XIII, 11-18, etc.

true miracles, special attention must be paid to the teleological element, *i. e.*, the purpose for which they are wrought. That purpose in most cases indicates what value is to be attributed to the alleged miraculous phenomenon. It is also necessary to examine the circumstances under which the effect is produced. Once it has been ascertained that the extraordinary effect is not produced by God, we may safely conclude that neither is it the work of a good angel. Whatever exceeds the powers of nature in such a phenomenon must, therefore, be attributed to evil spirits.

2. Division of Miracles

Miracles may be classified into groups under different aspects.

a) With regard to their relation to the forces of nature, we distinguish absolute and relative miracles.

An *absolute miracle* is one which transcends the powers of created nature, that is to say, of creation as a whole. The degree in which it transcends the powers of nature may differ.

b) This difference gives rise to the division into substantial and modal miracles. Substantial miracles (*miracula quoad substantiam*) transcend the powers of nature with regard to their

substance, whereas *modal miracles* transcend the powers of nature merely with regard to the manner in which they are wrought.

c) Closely related to this division is that into supernatural miracles (*miracula supra naturam*), miracles against nature (*miracula contra naturam*), and preternatural miracles (*miracula praeter naturam*). The supernatural and preternatural miracles are identical with those which we have just called substantial and modal. Those against nature are sometimes called *restraining miracles*, because, on account of their opposition to the natural disposition of the subject, they involve a supernatural restraint of opposing forces.

d) *Relative miracles* are those which merely exceed the known powers of nature, *i. e.*, the material world, and consequently can be wrought not only by the Creator, but also by His angels. The distinction between substantial and modal miracles may be applied to relative miracles also provided we do not lose sight of the fact that the different degrees of the supernatural refer solely to nature as known to us, and not as it may be beyond our knowledge.

e) Another division of miracles is based upon the *subject* in or on which the extraordinary effects are produced. From this point of view we

distinguish between *miracles of nature* and *miracles of the spirit*. The former are wrought in the corporeal world, *i. e.*, the bodies of men or external nature. To this class belong the *miraculous cures of diseases* and the *conversion of material substances*. The spiritual miracles appertain to the intellectual and moral life of man. This category comprises the *miraculous conversion of sinners*.

f) Another classification, drawn from different fields of human experience, is that of *cosmological, anthropological, and historical miracles*. Miracles of the first-mentioned class occur in the outside world, those of the second, in connection with man, and those of the third, in the gradual development of the human race.

Historical miracles were particularly frequent in the early days of Christianity.

Anthropological miracles may be physiological, intellectual, or moral.

2. The Possibility of Miracles

1. A miracle, as we have seen, is an extraordinary effect produced by God in the realm of human experience. Atheism, Deism, and materialistic Monism cannot consistently admit the possibility of such effects. For, if there is no

God, or if God is not distinct from the universe, or powerless to act upon it, the necessary postulates of a miracle are absent, namely, the existence of a supramundane personal God and a causal relation between that God and the world. Only from the theistic point of view can the possibility of miracles be consistently maintained.

2. Taking this point of view, therefore, we shall demonstrate the possibility of absolute miracles; once this is established, relative miracles offer no difficulty. We shall deal with the two principal factors in every miracle, namely, God and nature, prescinding from the angels, because they can co-operate in the working of miracles only dependently upon God, at His command, or at least with His permission.

3. The Vatican Council defines: "If anyone shall say that miracles are impossible, and therefore all the accounts regarding them, even those contained in Holy Scripture, are to be dismissed as fabulous or mythical; or that miracles can never be known with certainty, and that the divine origin of Christianity is not rightly proved by them; let him be anathema."²³

The Catholic Church, therefore, teaches that

²³ *Conc. Vat.*, Sess. III, *De Fide*, can. 4. (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1813).

miracles are possible. The proof for this thesis is derived (1) from the notion of God and (2) from the concept of nature.

1. Miracles are possible if they are consonant with God as their cause, and nature as their subject. They are consonant with both, therefore, they are possible.

a) *Miracles are consonant with God's omnipotence.* They transcend the powers of created nature and could be shown to be impossible only if it could be proved that the divine omnipotence had completely exhausted itself in the act of creation or in the preservation of the created universe, or that it were limited to the existing order of nature. Neither the one nor the other proposition can be demonstrated.

a) *God's omnipotence did not exhaust itself in the act of creating the world,* for this world, as one glance at man and his environment shows, is extremely limited and susceptible of improvement. Now the divine omnipotence is infinite; God must be able to realize all possible forms of being and consequently has unlimited room for displaying His power even on the supposition that the existing universe was created in a state of high original perfection.

β) Nor is God in His omnipotence *bound to the existing order of nature*; for as He required

no substratum out of which to fashion the universe, but called it into being solely by an act of His intellect and will, so He is able to produce effects in nature or human life without making use of creatures and of the powers with which He has endowed them.

γ) Hence, God in His omnipotence can produce any effect exceeding the powers of nature as a whole, and it is not necessary to prove this proposition of every class of miracles in particular. Only with regard to the manner of producing a miraculous effect it may be well to add a few remarks on miracles *contra naturam*. The working of this class of miracles has been variously explained. Some writers²⁴ assume that in case of a miracle of this kind (for instance, the preservation of the three youths in the furnace of fire), those powers of nature which would of themselves exert an effect contrary to the miracle are temporarily suspended by the withdrawal of God's conserving influence, and that their effects and the laws under which they operate, are also suspended. Suarez and others held that the laws of nature continue to operate, but their failure to produce their usual effects is the result of a withdrawal of divine co-

²⁴ For instance, Legrand, d. 1780.

operation.²⁵ In both hypotheses the laws of nature would be suspended.

δ) It cannot be denied that God, if He wished, could thus influence nature; but this theory has no sufficient basis in fact, and as there is available a simpler and more plausible explanation, we prefer to adopt the latter. According to the hypothesis set forth above, the powers of nature, or at least their operation and the laws under which they operate, are suspended while a miracle is being wrought. This is an arbitrary assumption. For if the powers of nature and the laws under which they operate are not noticed by us in some particular case, this does not prove that they do not exist; a superior power may have paralyzed the inferior powers and their laws. Nature occasionally presents phenomena of this sort. Thus the magnetic needle is diverted by an electric current, the chemical properties of some substances are impeded in their activity in plant organisms by the vitality of the latter, the free movements of the human body seem to be exempt from the law of gravity, and natural objects of various kinds are influenced in their existence and development by human interference.

²⁵ Cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, l. III, c. 99.

In a similar way we may explain the so-called *restraining miracles*. The higher power which suspends the forces of nature and its laws is the omnipotence of God. As soon as this supernatural influence ceases, nature resumes its normal course. What was temporarily suspended, was not the operation, or the laws governing the operation, of the natural causes, but merely their effect. This theory, now generally held by theologians, is preferable to the other because it involves no destruction of natural powers or operations, and consequently does not have to postulate a restoration of these powers. It is more solidly founded for the reason that it interferes as little as possible with the ordinary course of nature and falls in line with natural causality, thus corresponding admirably to the supernatural operation of God, which is directed not to the destruction of nature, but to its conservation and perfection.

b) *Miracles are consonant with the immutability of God*. As God decreed from all eternity to create a certain order of nature, so He predetermined that there should be exceptions to that order, and fixed the time at which they were to occur. This is an obvious postulate of God's absolute perfection and immutability. Every change in nature was foreseen and pre-

determined by the Creator from all eternity. Hence, the changes incident to miracles do not affect the essence of God, but only the created universe. This rule applies to miracles as well as to the ordinary processes of nature.

c) *Miracles do not interfere with the wisdom of God*, which requires that means be duly adapted to ends in all His outward operations. Such adaptation is manifest in nature and its laws. But while it primarily serves the preservation and development of nature, miracles are designed chiefly for moral ends, namely, to lead men to a better knowledge and love of God and to enable them to make sure of His communications. Miracles, therefore, take their place beside God's other works, not in order to correct nature, but to serve certain special purposes, which nature could not attain at all, or only in an imperfect manner. If nature's manner of operation is thereby incidentally altered for a short while and within a limited sphere, this is for the sake of a higher end and entails no disadvantages either to nature or to man.

Add to this the consideration that nothing is more apt to incite and challenge the attention of men than the extraordinary phenomenon of a miracle. Nothing so clearly manifests the existence and power of God as the supernatural

and palpable working of His omnipotence within the sphere of human experience; ²⁶ nothing, in fine, furnishes a surer guaranty for the divine origin of revelation than its confirmation by miracles. Thus the wisdom of God is not only not denied by assuming that He works miracles, but it is set off in the clearest light.

d) *Miracles agree perfectly with God's holiness*, in virtue of which He must regard Himself as the supreme goal to which all things tend. This is a general and immutable law to which the moral law of nature must conform. The laws governing material objects are of an altogether different type. They affect the interrelation and mutual co-operation of various kinds of material substances, which are subject to change without detriment to their relation to the Creator as their ultimate end and object. Miracles affect only the physical, not the moral laws of nature, and thus God's holiness is properly safeguarded.²⁷

e) *Miracles are moreover in admirable conformity with Divine Providence*. The government of the universe, in the interest of uniform direction and proper care for the welfare of

²⁶ Cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, l. III, c. 99.

²⁷ Cfr. St. Thomas, *De Potentia*, qu. VI, art. 1, ad 3; *Summa Theologica*, 1a, qu. 105, art. 6; Pohle-Preuss, *God: His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes*, pp. 251 sqq.

all creatures, demands stability in the operations and laws of nature. This stability would be endangered if miracles would approach in number the ordinary operations of nature, for it would then be extremely difficult to distinguish the rule from the exception, and an orderly and normal existence on earth would become impossible. No such disorder is to be apprehended from the miracles described in Holy Scripture. Though miracles are more frequently wrought at some periods than at others, their total number, if we take into account the experience of all mankind throughout the centuries of its history, is so small in comparison with the regular operations of nature, that they must always be regarded as exceptions to the rule. Therefore, too, we must seek a natural explanation for surprising phenomena until it is positively certain that they transcend the powers of nature.

2. *Miracles are consonant with the concept of nature.* A miraculous occurrence happens within and transcends the limits of nature. This proposition implies that nature is not absolutely necessary and unchangeable and that its powers are not infinitely perfect.

a) Absolute necessity cannot be ascribed to nature either with regard to its existence or with regard to the degree of its perfection. God

was entirely free to create or not to create, and therefore the perfection of what He did create depended entirely upon His free will. In matter of fact the created universe is not perfect, but susceptible of improvement, and, since it does not exist of necessity, may lose some of its perfections by supernatural intervention. What is true of nature in general, is likewise true of its various powers, which stand in a necessary relation to the substance in which they inhere, and by their activity reveal the value and innermost essence of the latter. Our general judgment of the qualities of nature, therefore, is based upon the powers of nature and the manner in which these powers are exercised. It is in them and in their manner of operation that we first observe the variability of nature.

b) The created universe, therefore, together with the *ensemble* of its powers and laws, under the supernatural influence of divine omnipotence, constitutes a variable quantity, and hence, so far as nature is concerned, miracles are manifestly possible.

c) Of this variability of nature, however, as observed above, God makes but limited use. All the variations which we meet in the case of a miracle can be traced to a threefold source: (a)

God either impedes the operation of the powers of nature (as when He enables a man to walk upon the water), or (β) He perfects those powers by increasing them (as when a sick person is suddenly cured), or (γ) He acts independently of nature's laws (as in the case of the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes).

d) Apart from such supernatural intervention on the part of God, the order of nature remains constant. It operates according to definite laws, the individual phenomena stand in uninterrupted connection with one another and with the *ensemble*, the quantity of matter and energy at nature's disposal, in spite of various changes, always remains the same. In this sense only (not in the sense that all "conditions lying outside the causal nexus of nature" are eliminated) can we speak, as Wundt does, of "a closed causality of nature."²⁸

e) The champions of the so-called *preformation theories* place an exaggerated emphasis on the constancy and independence of nature as against God. They assume in nature an original necessity of, or disposition favorable to, miracles. Leibniz²⁹ held that while a miracle tran-

²⁸ W. Wundt, *Logik*, Vol. II, 4th ed., Stuttgart, 1920, p. 332.

²⁹ *Théodicée sur la Bonité de Dieu*, n. 54, 62.

scends the natural power of all creatures, it is nevertheless a necessary constituent of the existing universe, because it is postulated by the idea of the best possible world, which in his philosophy is identical with the world as it actually exists. Houtteville³⁰ and Bonnet³¹ asserted that miracles are so deeply rooted in the powers of nature that they occur at the appointed time according to general laws unknown to us, without any special intervention on the part of God. Houtteville limited his theory to physical miracles, ascribed spiritual miracles to a special supernatural operation on the part of God, and placed the general laws according to which all miracles happen on a level with the laws of nature. Bonnet went a step farther and included the spiritual in the same class with physical miracles, postulating a special order of nature and corresponding general laws over and above the regular order.

Apart from the untenability of Leibniz's philosophical system (Optimism), his theory is clearly incompatible with the supernatural character of miracles. If nature demands miracles

³⁰ *La Religion Chrétienne Prouvée par les Faits*, Paris, 1722, pp. 24 sqq.

³¹ *Palingénésie Philosophique*, Vol. II, 1769, pp. 180 sqq.

for its perfection, then miracles may transcend the powers of nature, but they do not transcend its requirements, as they form part and parcel of the natural order.

According to Houtteville, physical miracles, and, according to Bonnet, both physical and spiritual miracles, differ from the ordinary phenomena of nature only in this respect that they are governed by laws unknown to us. A miracle, therefore, does not transcend the powers of nature; in other words, it is not a miracle at all. Moreover, the assumption of a real preformation involves the theory of miracles in great difficulty. What men, in conformity with Holy Scripture, are ordinarily inclined to attribute to the immediate intervention of divine omnipotence, is in this hypothesis effected by the powers of nature acting according to extremely complicated but undemonstrable laws. Thus, at the moment when Christ commanded Lazarus to rise from the grave, his soul, in obedience to some general law, reunited itself with his body; and the blind man (John IX) had his sight restored while he washed himself, because from the moment of its creation his body had been predestined to receive the faculty of sight at that precise juncture.

Objections

The possibility of miracles was denied by the pagan philosopher Celsus,³² by the Jewish Rationalist Baruch Spinoza,³³ and by innumerable others on the ground that every miracle involves an inadmissible breach of the laws of nature. Thus David F. Strauss says: "Our age is indebted to the laborious researches of many centuries for the knowledge that all existing things are interconnected by a chain of causes and effects which suffers no interruption. While it is true that the individual objects and spheres of the world with the course of their conditions and variations are by no means so completely shut off against one another as to be impervious to outside influences and interruptions, the operation of one object or sphere reaches over into that of the others, the free will of man disturbs the development of many objects of nature, and natural causes react upon human liberty: and all the while the *ensemble* of finite things forms an inside circle, which owes its existence and character to a higher being, and into which no new factors can enter. This conviction is so

³² Cfr. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, l. IV, c. 5 (Migne, *P. G.*, XI, 1036).

³³ *Tractatus Theol.-polit.*, Hamburg, 1670, c. 6, *de Miraculis*.

strong that in everyday life the opinion or assertion that a supernatural cause has directly interfered with nature is regarded as an evidence either of ignorance or of fraud.”³⁴ Paulsen says in his famous work on ethics: “Since the human mind has been saturated by natural science, which starts from the assumption that whatever happens, happens according to fixed laws, and shows the truth of this assumption more and more in detail, miracles and magical effects have become extremely obnoxious to reason.”³⁵ And again: “Miracles are exceptional effects, makeshifts by means of which the world, which usually follows its own bent, is readjusted from without.”³⁶ Harnack says: “We are firmly convinced that what happens in space and time is subject to the general laws of motion, and that in this sense, as an interruption of the order of nature, there can be no such things as miracles.”³⁷ Pfleiderer writes: “It is only with the introduction of the idea of nature as a law-abiding nexus of mutual effects produced by singular

³⁴ *Das Leben Jesu*, Vol. I, 13th ed., Tübingen, 1904, pp. 80 sq.

³⁵ *System der Ethik*, Vol. I, 9th ed., Stuttgart and Berlin, 1913, p. 439.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

³⁷ *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 66th–70th thousand, Leipsic, 1920, p. 17; English tr. by Th. B. Saunders, *What Is Christianity?* 4th ed., London, 1923, p. 23.

causes, that a miracle is definitely recognized as a phenomenon which abolishes that connection and, therefore, is contrary to nature. Former generations in their naïveté did not fully realize this fact because they were unfamiliar with the concept of nature on which it is based. . . . It is only since the second half of the seventeenth century, when the concept of nature was clearly delimited by mathematics and physical science, that courageous thinkers like Spinoza asserted the incompatibility of this concept with the assumption of miracles in the strict sense of the term, and now this conviction has become predominant in the world of science. . . . Schleiermacher correctly observed that there is no reason for assuming that the divine omnipotence should manifest itself more admirably in interrupting the continuity of nature than in promoting its unalterable course, which, like nature itself, rests upon divine institution. Every absolute miracle destroys the entire connection of nature forwards and backwards; nay, it abolishes the very concept of nature itself. . . . Besides, it is manifestly incompatible with the immutability of God to assume that He sometimes operates in an orderly and sometimes in a disorderly manner, that He sometimes confirms and sometimes upsets the

order of nature. Since we have recognized the order of nature as the manifestation of divine omnipotence, we cannot possibly assume an antagonism between the former and the latter, as if God were shackled or impeded by the order of nature and felt bound to break this bond now and then, or to brush aside this impediment. . . . The assumption of miracles contradicts both the true concept of God and the correct idea of nature as a chain of causes and effects governed by definite laws."³⁸

Similar objections are found in the writings of Volkelt,³⁹ Sabatier,⁴⁰ Ménégoz,⁴¹ Siebeck,⁴² and many others. It is not necessary to refute this contention after what we have said in the previous section on the possibility of miracles.

3. *The Knowability of Miracles*

1. It would be of little avail to demonstrate the possibility of miracles if they could not be certainly recognized as such. Some Rationalists

³⁸ *Religionsphilosophie auf geschichtlicher Grundlage*, 3rd ed., Berlin, 1896, pp. 566 sqq.

³⁹ *Vorträge zur Einführung in die Philosophie der Gegenwart*, Munich, 1892.

⁴⁰ *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion Based on Psychology and History*, New York, 1907, pp. 67 sqq.

⁴¹ German tr. *Der biblische Wunderbegriff*, by Baur, Freiburg, 1895.

⁴² *Lehrbuch der Religionsphilosophie*, Freiburg, 1893.

admit the possibility of miracles, but maintain that none can ever be known with certainty. Against these objectors we must show that miracles are knowable.

2. Since we are dealing here with miracles as criteria of revelation, the only kind in question are *physical miracles*, the effects of which can be perceived by means of the senses.

3. A miracle may be considered either as a *historical fact* or as a *supernatural phenomenon*, and consequently our knowledge of miracles may be either historical or philosophical. A miracle is historically knowable in so far as the fact can be shown to have happened; it is knowable philosophically in so far as its supernatural origin can be demonstrated.

4. In saying that miracles are historically and philosophically knowable, we do not mean that the historical and supernatural character of every single miracle can be established with absolute certainty. In some instances doubts may remain both as to the actual occurrence and the supernatural provenience of a miraculous phenomenon. Whenever this is the case, the phenomenon in question cannot be utilized as a criterion of revelation.

5. What we have to show is this: The miraculous character of an occurrence cannot prevent

us from demonstrating its historical reality and its supernatural, divine origin. It is in this sense that the two following theses are to be understood.

The historical actuality of miracles can be known with certainty by those who witness them, by those who were absent at the time when they occurred, and by later generations of men.

a) Those who witness a miracle are able to recognize it as such if they have the full use of their senses. The activity of the senses in the perception of a miracle is in no way extraordinary. If, for example, a corpse is restored to life by the word of a man, the eye-witnesses first behold the dead body, then they hear the words of the thaumaturgist, and finally they see the corpse move and show signs of returning life.

b) The extraordinary character of a miraculous occurrence is calculated to attract and hold the attention of men, thus rendering the conditions of sense perception more favorable, and there is no reason why a miracle, in its external manifestation, should not be perceived with at least the same certainty as any other external phenomenon.

c) If a miraculous event has been observed and recognized by eye-witnesses, the knowledge

of its occurrence can be communicated to others who were absent when it happened. All that is necessary to render such a communication credible is the existence of an authentic report attesting the facts. The credibility of the witnesses is subject to exactly the same criteria as if the occurrence had been purely natural. The miraculous character of an event does not in any wise derogate from the credibility of those who bear witness to it. It may even instigate others who hear of it to inquire into the facts more carefully and to subject the credibility of the witnesses to a rigorous test. This will be the case especially if the recipient of the message has a personal interest in the matter, and if it would be to his advantage to prove the witnesses unreliable. Undue credulity or carelessness on the one hand would thus be compensated for by incredulity and critical research on the other. If there are no positive reasons for doubt, the mere fact that the miracle occurred in the far-off past cannot shake the credibility of the witnesses.

Objections Refuted

1. *Renan* writes: "We do not say: 'Miracle is impossible'; we say, 'there has been hitherto no miracle proved.' Let a thaumaturgist present

himself to-morrow with testimony sufficiently important to merit our attention; let him announce that he is able, I will suppose, to raise the dead; what would be done? A commission composed of physiologists, physicians, chemists, and persons experienced in historical criticism, would be appointed. This commission would choose the corpse, make certain that death was real, designate the hall in which the experiment should be made, and regulate the whole system of precautions necessary to leave no room for doubt. If, under such conditions, the resurrection should be performed, a probability almost equal to certainty would be obtained. However, as an experiment ought always to be capable of being repeated, as one ought to be capable of doing again what one has done before, and as in the matter of miracles there can be no question of easy or difficult, the thaumaturgist would be invited to reproduce his marvelous act under other circumstances, upon other bodies, in another medium. If the miracle succeeds each time, two things would be proven: first, that supernatural acts do come to pass in the world; second, that the power to perform them belongs or is delegated to certain persons.”⁴³

Rousseau expresses himself similarly. “Where

⁴³ *Life of Jesus*, Engl. tr., pp. 44 sq.

are the miracles [of which we hear]?" he asks. "They are in books. Who wrote those books? Men. Who witnessed those miracles? Men. Who report and bear witness to them? Men. Hence all the testimonies that can be adduced are purely human. Men report what other men claim to have seen. Can I rely upon such purely human testimony when there is question of a miracle? Impossible! To establish a miracle requires stronger evidence than purely human testimony, which is never safe against deception." ⁴⁴

Strauss rejects the knowability of miracles on the score that "there cannot be found in all history a miracle which is attested (a) by a sufficient number of (b) adequately trained witnesses to exclude the possibility of self-deception;—of witnesses, moreover, who (c) can be proved to have been so honest and to have had so much at stake as to render intentional deception unthinkable; there is on record no miracle, in fine, which (d) happened in such a frequented place that the detection of its untruth would have been inevitable." ⁴⁵

These writers are unanimous in asserting that no miracle has ever been securely established. This assertion is based on their extravagant de-

⁴⁴ *Profession de la Foi*, Paris, 1848, p. 437.

⁴⁵ *Die christliche Glaubenslehre*, Vol. I, Tübingen, 1840, p. 240.

mands regarding the knowability of miracles. Experimental confirmation cannot rightfully be demanded in the case of a miracle, since there is question not of phenomena which happen according to unalterable laws of nature, but of free demonstrations of the divine omnipotence. No special education or training is required to attest a miracle; all that is necessary is an open eye and ordinary common sense. Rousseau goes decidedly too far in refusing assent to human testimony when it involves a miracle.

The conditions set up by Strauss are fulfilled in a number of recent scientific tests, such as that of the sudden cure of Peter de Rudder, on April 7, 1875, at Oostacker, Belgium; that of A. Chagnon at Lourdes, August 21, 1891; that of J. Dehant at the same place, September 13, 1878, and many others.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Alfred Deschamps, S.J., M.D., Sc.D., published a pamphlet on the de Rudder case in 1906 (Catholic Truth Society of Scotland), which Sir Bertram C. A. Windle summarizes in a chapter ("Some Plain Facts about Miracles of Healing") of his book *On Miracles and Some Other Matters*, London, 1924, pp. 29-39. Peter de Rudder was an inhabitant of a village called Jabbeke, between Bruges and Ostend, Belgium. In 1867, when he was forty-four, his left leg was broken below the knee by the fall of a tree. The fracture was what is known as "compound"—that is to say, the tissues covering the bones were torn, so that the broken ends were exposed to the influence of the air and its bacteria. The fracture was set and dressed by a neighborhood physician, but the ends of the bones failed to reunite, and suppuration set

2. *Hume* held that experience refutes all testimony concerning miraculous occurrences. "The reason why we place any credit in witnesses and historians," he says, "is not derived from any

in. After some months the attending physician and several other medical men who had been called in for consultation, decided to amputate the leg. However, de Rudder refused his consent. In January, 1875, his condition had grown so bad that two doctors who visited him again told him that amputation was his only hope. Those who saw him on the sixth of April testified immediately after the cure that the fragments of the broken leg were piercing through the skin and were separated from each other by a suppurating wound about three centimeters in length. On April 7, eight years and two months after his leg was broken, de Rudder went to a shrine at Oostacker, near Ghent, which had been set up by some pious person in imitation of that at Lourdes. While sitting on a bench there, he suddenly felt that his leg was cured, rose up without his crutches, passed through the files of persons around the grotto, and knelt down to make his thanksgiving for his cure. The case was carefully investigated by Dr. Deschamps and others, and there can be no reasonable doubt that he was cured by a miracle. The salient facts are summed up by Dr. Windle as follows (*ibid.*, pp. 33 sqq.): "(1) The man had both bones of his leg broken at the age of forty-four, and let it be noted that the age is an important factor, for union is readier and more rapid in the youthful. (2) The bones refused to unite under medical treatment, and remained ununited for more than eight years. . . . (3) The bones suddenly reunited at Oostacker and remained soundly knit for twenty-three years [de Rudder died of pneumonia at the age of seventy-five, in 1898]. (4) The post-mortem condition shows that the bones had been broken and reunited. . . . There was an instantaneous cure. . . . The muscles were at once restored to their perfect condition. . . . There was no shortening . . . because there was suddenly found an amount of the necessary material to fill the gap, an amount altogether in excess of that which normally exists in any human being in a free state, and therefore available." Cfr. Leopold Fonck,

connexion, which we perceive *a priori*, between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them. But when the fact attested is such a one as has seldom fallen under our observation, here is a contest of two opposite experiences; of which the one destroys the other, as far as its force goes, and the superior can only operate on the mind by the force, which remains." ⁴⁷

"But in order to increase the probability against the testimony of witnesses, let us suppose, that the fact, which they affirm, instead of being only marvellous, is really miraculous; and suppose also, that the testimony considered apart and in itself, amounts to an entire proof; in that case, there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail, but still with a diminution of its force, in proportion to that of its antagonist. A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against

S.J., *Die Wunder des Herrn im Evangelium*, Vol. I, 2nd ed., Innsbruck, 1907, pp. 15 sq., with bibliography; G. Bertrin, *Histoire Critique des Événements de Lourdes*, Paris, 1909; IDEM, art. "Lourdes" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, pp. 389 sqq.; Dr. F. de Grandmaison de Bruno, *Twenty Cures at Lourdes Medically Discussed*, London, 1920; Dr. E. le Bec, *Medical Proof of the Miraculous*, New York, 1922.

⁴⁷ David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding*, Oxford, 1894, p. 113.

a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined.”⁴⁸

“The plain consequence is (and it is a general maxim worthy of our attention), that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavours to establish.”⁴⁹

The same objection is repeated in somewhat different words by other writers. Thus Zeller says: “When there is question of the credibility of a miraculous tale, the real point at issue is: What is more probable—that something has here actually happened which contradicts our whole experience, or that the tradition which hands down such a report is false? The answer is obvious. For as the probability of an assumption can be measured only by its agreement with others which we know to be true, and since experience offers innumerable examples of inaccurate observation, false tradition, intentional and unintentional fiction, in general, of incorrect and unreliable reporting, whereas we have not one authentic example of a fully attested miracle, not one genuine instance of an effect

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 115 sq.

not produced by natural causes, we can imagine no case in which the historian would not be compelled to find it far more probable that he was dealing with an inaccurate report than with a miraculous event."⁵⁰

Hume argues against the knowability of miracles on the strength of historic evidence. He does not deny that a miracle could be proved by the testimony of eye-witnesses. His whole argument is based on the assumption that the only reliable evidence is that which agrees with past experience. So long as I have myself not witnessed a miracle, I cannot accept the testimony of another who claims to have had that experience. But this is a false principle. A witness is generally assumed to be trustworthy if he has knowledge of the event to which he testifies and if he is willing to tell the truth about it. The acceptance of his testimony in no wise rests upon any knowledge which we may happen to possess on the subject from our own experience. If historical reports could claim credibility only when they agree with ordinary experience, history would have to surrender a large tract of its terrain, for so long as we had not taken part in a military campaign, a pagan sacrifice, a gladiatorial contest, or a parliamentary debate, we

⁵⁰ *Historische Zeitschrift*, Vol. IV, 1860, p. 101.

should have to reject all reports of such events as incredible. The same conclusion would hold for all other spheres of human knowledge, for there is not one in which men are not compelled to accept the testimony of others as a means of acquiring knowledge for themselves. Scientific progress is incompatible with Hume's demands.

Equally untenable is the English sceptic's further contention that the case against miracles is as complete as any case based upon human observation can possibly be, because a constant and uninterrupted experience has given us a knowledge of the laws of nature which miracles are supposed to violate. For, apart from the fact that the laws of nature are *not* violated by miracles, experience can tell us only what happens when nature is left to its own resources. The witnesses to a miracle, on the other hand, assert that something has happened which cannot be deduced from the laws of nature. Their report is based on actual observation. An effect which, so far as human experience goes, has never been produced by men or by any purely material power of nature, transcends the capacity of nature. This fact we establish by the same empirical method by which we have ascertained the laws of nature. What has never happened in the

experience of the human race, cannot have happened; that is to say, what the known powers of nature have never effected before, cannot be effected by them now. Hence, if it is certain that a miracle has happened, we know that a supernatural power must have been at work. Uniform experience and the report of miracles, therefore, refer to two entirely different objects, and to hold that experience must always be right, is to assume that there is no cause which could produce an effect transcending the powers of nature.⁵¹

The fact that there are innumerable examples of inaccurate observation should, of course, inspire us with caution, but it is no reason for rejecting all reports of miracles as *a priori* untrustworthy. The aversion displayed towards miracles by modern hypercritics is as reprehensible as the credulity to which not a few pseudomiracles owe their existence. Only the *via media* of just and sober criticism can lead to the truth.

⁵¹ For a more detailed refutation of Hume see J. H. Newman, *Essays on Miracles*, new impression, London, 1911, pp. 10 sqq., 155, 175 sq.; C. Gutberlet, *Lehrbuch der Apologetik*, Vol. II, 4th ed., pp. 124-145; van Weddingen, *De Miraculo*, Louvain, 1869, pp. 367 sqq.; Ign. Ottiger, S.J., *Theologia Fundamentalis*, Vol. I, pp. 209 sqq.; Eug. Müller, *Natur und Wunder, ihr Gegensatz und ihre Harmonie*, Freiburg i. B., 1892, pp. 190 sqq.; IDEM, *Das Wunder und die Naturwissenschaft*, Freiburg i. Sw., 1898.

Our second thesis is that the supernatural, divine origin of a miracle can sometimes be established with certainty.

The proof for this proposition is based on the relation of miracles to the created causes operating in the universe. We argue as follows: The supernatural divine origin of a miracle can be established if it can be shown that an occurrence transcends the powers of nature and is not attributable to demonic influences. Now, it can be demonstrated that a miracle transcends the powers of nature and is not attributable to demonic influences. Therefore, the supernatural divine origin of a miracle can be established with certainty.

Every miracle is produced by one of three causes; either (1) by nature, *i. e.*, man and the material forces of his environment; or (2) by the influence of evil spirits, or (3) by almighty God. (Divine omnipotence, as we have observed on a previous page, is here to be taken in a wide sense, so as to include the activity of the angels.) A miracle must be attributed to God as soon as it has been shown that it is not an effect of either of the other two causes named.

1. It can be shown that a miracle transcends the powers of nature, *i. e.*, man and the material forces of his environment. True, we do not

know the powers of nature well enough to be able to say positively, in every single instance, whether or not a given effect exceeds those powers. The fact that new elements, powers, and laws of nature are being constantly discovered, is clear evidence of the incompleteness of our knowledge. Even when the essences and powers of things are known to us, it is often impossible to tell exactly how far their natural operations extend. In spite of this defect, however, we are able in many instances to determine negatively *what nature cannot do*. We occasionally have a similar experience in the realm of pure nature. Thus we cannot say precisely how heavy a burden a man can carry, or where yellow ceases and green begins in the solar spectrum. Nevertheless no one doubts that it is impossible for any man to carry off a mountain or that yellow is a color distinct from green. Though we are frequently unable to judge with certitude concerning the powers and properties of nature, we do not find it difficult to do so as soon as the limits of our knowledge are extended. In the same way it can often be shown that a given phenomenon transcends the powers of nature. In some cases the effect itself is of a kind that manifestly exceeds the material powers of nature and of man, as when a corpse is raised to

life or a material substance (*e. g.*, bread) is suddenly multiplied on a large scale. In other cases it is plain from the manner in which the effect appears, that it cannot be produced by the powers of nature. This is the case especially if the reported effect and its apparent cause stand in no relation to each other. Thus everybody knows that spittle mixed with clay is not an adequate means of healing blindness (John IX, 6 sqq.) and that a simple word cannot cure leprosy.

Hence, when there is question of establishing the miraculous nature of a fact or of an event, it is not necessary to examine what nature with all its powers may be able to do, but simply to make sure that the natural powers credited with producing the miraculous effect could not possibly have caused it.

Objections Refuted

The Rationalists try to explain all miracles by purely natural means. They say:

a) The thaumaturgist has cleverly utilized powers of nature as yet unknown to us; or

b) Hidden powers of nature may have accidentally produced the effect precisely at the moment when the alleged miracle was to be wrought; or

c) There may have been fraud and deception practiced; or

d) Suggestion, hypnotism, occultism, or hysteria may have played an important rôle.

We reply:

a) Where there are positive indications that the thaumaturgist employed *natural means*, this fact must, of course, be taken into consideration. But if the assumption is arbitrary, inspired solely by the desire to explain a miracle in a purely natural way, it is to be rejected.

b) The *accidental coincidence* of favorable circumstances may explain the appearance of a miraculous effect in some cases, but that the expected effect in a number of instances should occur accidentally, at the precise moment when the thaumaturgist utters his command or performs a certain action, is absolutely improbable in the light of experience. Moreover, Divine Providence could not possibly permit such a coincidence to be used in confirmation of an alleged divine claim which has no basis in fact.

c) Whether or not an alleged miracle is the result of *fraud* or *intentional deception*, must be ascertained *a posteriori* in each individual case. A thorough investigation of all the surrounding circumstances, of the purpose for which the alleged miracle was wrought, and of

the person of the thaumaturgist, will usually establish the truth. If, in spite of the most careful research, the matter remains doubtful, the phenomenon in question must not be cited as a miracle.

d) *Hypnotic suggestion* plays a part only in connection with those miracles which occur in relation to the living. For this reason the theory under consideration confines itself to the explanation of cures wrought by suggestion. However, since suggestion acts immediately upon the nerves, only such diseases as have their seat in the nervous system can be cured by hypnotism. The cure of other organic diseases can be effected only mediately by the influence of the nerves upon the metabolism of the body, and therefore cannot take place suddenly.⁵² This is attested by the representatives of the suggestion theory themselves. Thus Bernheim says: "Suggestion works no miracles; it heals in accordance with the biological laws that govern the human organism."⁵³ Charcot, the

⁵² Cfr. E. Wasmann, S.J., *Eine plötzliche Heilung aus neuester Zeit in the Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, Vol. LVIII (1900), p. 126.

⁵³ *Hypnotisme, Suggestion, Psychothérapie*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1903, p. 503; cfr. Koch-Preuss, *A Handbook of Moral Theology*, Vol. IV, pp. 278 sqq.; G. Surbled, *Catholic Moral Teaching in its Relations to Medicine*, tr. by H. J. Eggemann, Vol. I, St. Louis, 1929; O'Malley and Walsh, *Essays in Pastoral Medicine*, N. Y., 1906, pp. 120 sqq.

father of modern faith-healing, writes: "The domain of faith-healing, we must admit, is a limited one. In order to attain results, the faith-healer must take up cases in which a cure can be effected solely by that power which the spirit wields over the body. No outside influence is able to make faith-healing go beyond these limits; for we can do nothing against the laws of nature."⁵⁴

Healing by suggestion, therefore, is possible only in certain well-defined cases and must not be assumed to have taken place except when it is indicated by the circumstances and the conduct of those who co-operated in effecting the cure.

The same considerations must govern us in judging cures wrought by means of *occultism*. The explanation of the Gospel miracles given by occultists are as varied as the occultistic theories themselves. Fraud and hallucination, the hidden powers of mediums, demonic and other spiritual influences are called into play.⁵⁵ But

⁵⁴ *La Foi qui Guérit*, Paris, 1897; cfr. K. Knur, *Christus Medicus?* Freiburg, 1905, pp. 64 sqq.; J. de Bonniot, S.J., *Le Miracle et ses Contrefaçons*, Paris, 1887, revised edition, 1895. This work is unfortunately out of print; we cite the German translation, *Wunder und Scheinwunder*, Mayence, 1889, pp. 256-305.

⁵⁵ The opinion is gaining ground that while there is much deception and fakery on the part of mediums, a certain percentage of telepathic and telekinetic phenomena are undoubtedly genuine.

common sense tells us that miracles and occult phenomena cannot be assigned to the same category merely because there are certain remote analogies between them.

The influence of evil spirits in connection with miracles will be discussed later.

To explain miracles, some writers maintain that the sick whom Christ cured suffered from hysteria. *Hysteria* is a nervous affection in which the victim loses control over the emotions and yields to imaginary sensations.⁵⁶ This disease must never be assumed to exist on *a priori* grounds, but each individual case must be judged on its own merits, and only if the symptoms are unmistakable, may the existence of hysteria be asserted.

It is not, however, possible as yet to explain these phenomena satisfactorily. There are reasons for assuming that some mediums are endowed with peculiar powers which, while supranormal, are quite natural, though the mediums themselves, almost without exception, believe that they are in contact with spirits of another world. Cfr. T. K. Oesterreich, *Der Okkultismus im modernen Weltbild*, 3rd ed., Dresden, 1923; A. Ph. von Schrenck-Notzing, *Materialisationsphänomene*, Munich, 1923 (Engl. tr. by E. E. Fournier d'Albe, *The Phenomena of Materialization*, London, 1920); R. Lambert, *Okkultismus und Spiritismus*, Stuttgart, 1921; A. M. Lepicier, *The Unseen World*, 2nd ed., London, 1909; J. Liljencrants, *Spiritism and Religion*, N. Y., 1918; Koch-Preuss, *A Handbook of Moral Theology*, Vol. IV, pp. 280 sqq.

⁵⁶ Bonniot, *Le Miracle et ses Contrefaçons*, Germ ed., pp. 305-398.

2. It can be shown that some miracles are *not the result of demonic influences*.

To make sure that a phenomenon which transcends the known powers of nature is attributable to demonic influence, it is necessary first of all to investigate the phenomenon itself as well as its accompanying circumstances.

a) The *phenomenon itself* may clearly manifest its miraculous character, *e. g.*, when it is certain that new substances were created out of nothing, or that an event occurred which took no time. For only divine omnipotence can operate in this manner. Every finite, created being requires a substratum upon which to exercise its faculties. Creatural activity is limited to effecting some change in an already existing being, and that within the limits of time. Only the infinitely perfect Creator possesses the entire plenitude of being and undivided activity in one single moment (eternity). For this reason the effects of divine omnipotence are not subject to the limitations of time.⁵⁷

b) If the extraordinary event does not clearly point to a divine origin, we must examine the *accompanying circumstances*. An extraordinary

⁵⁷ Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God: His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes*, pp. 306 sqq., 402 sq.

effect produced by God must bear the stamp of holiness, must be worthy of His Divine Majesty, and conducive to the welfare of men. Of extraordinary effects which are the work of evil spirits we may, on the contrary, expect that they should possess marks which in some way betray their origin. At the same time we must stick to the principle that God in His providence and holiness cannot possibly permit men to be hopelessly deceived by extraordinary demonic effects. Least of all is this to be assumed when such effects bear on the founding of a new religion.

The circumstances here in question are mainly: the person of the thaumaturgist; the manner in which the extraordinary effect is produced; its purpose and its results.

a) If the thaumaturgist is a proud, ambitious notoriety-seeker, his pretended miracles are, to say the least, very suspicious. For it does not seem consistent with the dignity of God that He should make use of an unworthy instrument, especially in establishing a new religion.

β) If the *manner* in which the alleged miracle is wrought bears the earmarks of absurdity, superstition, obscenity, or impiety, or if it is wrought while the thaumaturgist is unconscious

of what is going on, or is in a state of violent excitement, divine co-operation is excluded.

γ) If the purpose of an extraordinary phenomenon is evil or unworthy of God, there can be no real miracle. Thus if the activity of the pretended thaumaturgist serves pecuniary profit, if he works "miracles" to make money, or to become famous, or to satisfy idle curiosity, or to confirm an evidently false doctrine, he cannot be a messenger of God.

δ) If hatred and discord are the immediate effects of a pretended miracle, or if it leads to insubordination to legitimate authority or to a general deterioration of morals, it cannot be the work of God.

ε) That divine revelation expressly denounces certain occurrences as pseudo-miracles, furnishes us with an additional and a sufficient means—should all others fail—of distinguishing truth from falsehood, the genuine from the spurious.

Examples of Pseudo-Miracles

The history of pagan and non-Christian religions records certain extraordinary phenomena which some writers place on a level with the miracles of Jesus Christ and His Saints. Besides, there are numerous occurrences within the Christian pale which are regarded as miraculous by many, but not

accepted as such by the Church. It will be useful to digress a moment to examine the true character of these pseudo-miracles.

1. *The "Miracles" of Buddha*.—Although Buddha is described as morally spotless, his pretended miracles cannot be genuine. To begin with, the period in which they are supposed to have been wrought is too indefinite. These "miracles" are, moreover, so fantastic that they impress us rather as fairy tales lifted from the "Arabian Nights." It will suffice to quote two or three examples. On one occasion, we are told, six Brahmins challenged Sakyamuni (former name of Gautama Buddha, meaning, "the hermit of the tribe of Sakya") to a miracle contest. He accepted the challenge and erected a vast hall, 100,000 yards in length, wherein he wrought a series of "miracles," the greatest of which is described as follows: Two kings had made him a present of an artificial lotus flower, the size of a wagon-wheel. It was of gold, with a stem of diamonds. Sakyamuni sat down with crossed legs in the centre of the flower, and immediately above it there appeared another, in which he was also seen sitting surrounded by innumerable buddhas, whom he had created, and who ascended to the eighth heaven, where they held a meeting. Repeatedly Sakyamuni performed the "miracle of the pairs" (*yamaka-pātihāriya*), *i. e.*, he rose up in the air, flames of fire came from the upper part of his body and streams of water from the lower part. Then the process was reversed. Next fire came from the right side of his body, and water from the left, and so on through twenty-two variations of pairs. He then created a jewelled promenade in the sky, and, walking along it, produced the illusion that he was standing or sitting or lying down, and varied the

illusions in a similar way.⁵⁸ At another time, when the heretics had pulled up the mango trees for a league around Sāvattthi, Buddha told Ganda, the king's gardener, who had found a ripe mango seed, to plant it in the ground, and no sooner had he washed his hands over it, than it sprang up into a tree fifty hands high. Then with three strides he rose to heaven and there kept his seventh retreat.⁵⁹

It needs no argument to prove that such "miracles" are pure figments of the imagination. But even apart from the character of these alleged miracles, the doctrine of Buddha, which has atheism for its basis and annihilation as its final goal, plainly shows that there cannot be question of divine intervention in its favor.

2. *The "Miracles" of Æsculapius and Serapis.*—Reputable authors like Tacitus, Suetonius, Pausanias, and Galenus report that Æsculapius (Asklepios, "the great lover of men") and Serapis, a syncretistic god who was identified with Osiris-Apis, Zeus, Helios, and Mithra, miraculously healed the sick, even such as had been given up by physicians. These cures are said to have been wrought through the use of medicaments prescribed by the gods, either directly in a dream or through priests. In some cases the "cures" seem adapted to the nature of the disease, in some they appear indifferent, while in many others they flatly

⁵⁸ E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London, 1927, pp. 98 sq. For a long time this extraordinary performance (*yamaka-pātihāriya*) was not understood, but we now possess canonical descriptions of it in *Patīsammbhidāmagga*, I, 125 and *Mystic*, III, 115.—On the pseudo-miracles of Buddhism see further P. Sinthern, S.J., *Buddhismus und buddhistische Strömungen der Gegenwart*, Münster i. W., 1905, pp. 11 sqq.

⁵⁹ E. J. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

contradict the usual practice of the medical profession. Where a higher, invisible power is at work, we obtain the impression that some tricky imp is intent upon deceiving men. The patient, to be cured, had first to worship the respective god by prayer or sacrifice. This is evidence enough that these pseudo-miracles were wrought by evil spirits. The manner in which they were effected and their evident purpose, *i. e.*, the promotion of idolatry, exclude every other interpretation.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ On the impostures practiced by the priests of Æsculapius, Serapis, Dionysos, etc., see Döllinger, *Gentile and Jew*, tr. by Darnell, Vol. II, pp. 211 sq. Dr. Döllinger says: "These impostures and juggleries are not to be estimated by a later and Christian standard, for it was an acknowledged principle that it was both lawful and expedient to impose upon the people, to conceal the truth from them, and to confirm them in their errors by public speeches and state ceremonial. . . . The authorities never troubled themselves to investigate and to compromise the priests, and there were many instances of a neighborhood or city suffering detriment when the reputation of its local sanctuary was diminished by a discovery of the kind. In the time of Pausanias the Eleans were still proud of Dionysos having visited them in person. Three empty cauldrons were placed in a cellar, and sealed up by the priests in the presence of citizens and strangers; the next day they were found filled with wine by the god's own hand, a prodigy confirmed on oath by all present. At Andros, too, every year, on the festival of Dionysos, wine flowed from the temple (Paus., ix, 18, 3). . . . Servius mentions the temple of the mother of gods being opened, not by the hand, but by prayer (iv, 31). Pausanias was eye-witness to smoke issuing of its own accord from the tomb of the Heraclid Pioniae every time a mortuary offering was made to it. These sacerdotal impostures seem to have been practiced most frequently in the temples of Æsculapius and the Serapaea. The object was to support the credit of these places of healing, the priests on the spot taking care to hire poor people to feign suffering and disease

3. The "Miracles" of Apollonius of Tyana.—Apollonius Tyanaeus (a native of Tyana in Cappadocia, circa 4 B. C. to 96 A. D.), was a Pythagorean philosopher whose life, written by Philostratus (200 A. D.), has come down to us. He travelled through Asia Minor, Parthia, and India, discussing philosophical problems with the Brahmins, then returned to Greece and visited Rome. Later he went to Alexandria and to Ethiopia. He laid claim to supernatural powers, and many miracles are attributed to him—some so closely resembling those of the Gospels that it has been conjectured that his whole story is a fabrication, intended by its author as a rival to the Christian narrative. It is related that at his command waiters made of black ore sprang from miraculously provided tripods and proceeded to serve wine and water flowing from those same tripods. On another occasion Achilles appeared before his guests, five yards high, grew seven yards before their eyes, and then disappeared as suddenly as he had come, at the cock's crow. These and many similar tales are no doubt fables; but there are other features of the life story of Apollonius which seem to contain an element of truth. Thus he is reported to have exorcised devils, called a sudden halt to the spread of the plague, and announced the death of the Emperor Domitian at Ephesus at the very moment when that cruel tyrant was assassinated in far-off Rome. There must have been some basis for the great veneration in which Apollonius was held a hundred years after his demise and for the fact that the Emperor Septimius Severus received him among his Lares and Penates and gave him a statue alongside those of Abra-

of all kinds, and to pretend to be cured by a miracle wrought in one or other of these temples, or by an oracle therein communicated. (*Clementin. Homil.*, IX, 18, p. 691)." (*Op. cit.*, II, 212 sq.)

ham and Jesus Christ. The truth probably is that, as many pagans and Christians believed already during his life-time, Apollonius was a magician who wrought his "miracles" by the aid of the devil. This assumption agrees with the fact that he regarded the promotion of paganism as his life-work.⁶¹

4. *The "Miracles" of the Jansenists.*—The history of Christian heresies is as rich in pseudo-miracles as that of paganism. The Gnostics and Montanists of the early centuries performed many strange "miracles." Later we meet with similar phenomena among the Albigenses, the Anabaptists, the Jansenists, and the Mormons. The historicity of many of the facts reported need not be denied, but there is nothing to prove that they were genuine miracles. Some of them have in fact been shown to be fraudulent, while others find a natural explanation in the peculiar qualities of the persons concerned, and still others, which appear to exceed the powers of nature, betray demonic influence by their intrinsic connection with crime and vice. Prominent among pseudo-miracles of this kind are the phenomena which took place in 1727 and later at the tomb of the Jansenist deacon, François de Paris, in the graveyard of Saint-Medard. Marvelous cures were reported and so persistently noised abroad that soon the sick and the curious flocked to the little cemetery. David Hume in his famous *Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding* cites these phenomena as an example to show how well miracu-

⁶¹ Cfr. J. de Bonniot, S.J., pp. 163-192; A. Seitz, *Christus-Zeugnisse*, Cologne, 1906, pp. 68 sqq.; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. X, p. 746. Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* and some letters ascribed to the latter were published in *Philostrati Opera Omnia*, ed. Olearius, Leipsic, 1709, and ed. Kayser, *ibid.*, 1870-71.

lous events can be attested without meriting credence.⁶² The Jansenists appealed to these "miracles" in confirmation of the orthodoxy of their belief. But if we examine the occurrences in the cemetery of Saint-Medard a little more closely, we can easily see that they were not genuine miracles. Thousands who visited the tomb of François de Paris were seized by violent convulsions, fell into transports, real or imaginary, and, while in this condition, inveighed against the pope and the bishops. Some of these "convulsionaries," as they were called, were men who led an ascetic life, whereas others freely indulged in gross vices. A "convulsionary" nicknamed "La Salamandre" remained suspended for more than nine minutes above a fiery brazier, enveloped only in a sheet. Tests of this sort were called "*secours*," and the "*secouristes*" distinguished between "*petits-secours*" and "*grands-secours*," the latter alone being supposed to require supernatural power. The "*secouristes*" were soon divided into "*discernantes*" and "*melangistes*"; the former distinguished between the work itself and its grotesque or objectionable features, which they ascribed to the devil or to human weakness, while the latter regarded the convulsions and the "*secours*" as a singular work of Divine Providence, in which even the shocking elements had a distinct purpose and significance.⁶³ Out of the mass of so-called miraculous cures the Jansenist theologians selected eight as real miracles. They were cases where patients were healed of cancer, dropsy, blindness, paralysis, and a few other serious maladies. But there was absolutely no trace of the divine seal in these happenings. On the contrary, all the circumstances seem to in-

⁶² *An Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding*, ed. by L. A. Selby-Bigge, Oxford, 1894, pp. 124 sq.

⁶³ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII, p. 292.

dicating that the "convulsionaries" were hysterics, cured (in so far as they were cured at all) by suggestion. Several of the cures were investigated judicially, and it was proved that the testimony in their favor was either false, preconcerted, and more than once retracted, or the product of a diseased and fanatical imagination.⁶⁴ Moreover, "the convulsions and the *secours* took place under circumstances which mere good taste would reject as unworthy of divine wisdom and holiness. Not only were the cures, both acknowledged and claimed, supplementary of one another, but cures, convulsions, and *secours* belonged to the same order of facts and tended to the same concrete end. We are, therefore, justified in concluding that the finger of God did not appear in the whole or in any of its parts."⁶⁵

The question remains whether these prodigies are explicable by natural causes or whether the devil had a hand in some of them. J. Forget, whom we have been quoting, says that "each of these opinions has its adherents, but the former seems difficult to uphold despite, and in part perhaps because of, the light which recent experiments in suggestion, hypnotism, and Spiritism have thrown on the problem."⁶⁶

4. *Miracles as Criteria of Divine Revelation*

1. For a miracle to be used as a criterion of divine revelation it is not enough that its his-

⁶⁴ *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII, p. 293.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*—Cfr. Bonriot, *op. cit.*, pp. 129–226; the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. IV, pp. 95 sqq.; S. P. Fregelles, *The Jansenists; their Rise, Persecution, and Existing Fragments*, London, 1851.

torical and philosophical truth be fully established; it must also be shown that *the miracle was wrought in confirmation of revealed doctrine*. This property of a miracle, based on its relation to revelation, is called its *relative truth*. It is from it that a miracle derives its demonstrative power. Genuine miracles may happen anywhere, even in places where non-revealed or false religions are current; but they are never wrought in support of heterodox beliefs.

2. The divine origin of a doctrine can be confirmed by a miracle either immediately or mediately. The confirmation is *immediate* if the miracle is wrought expressly for the purpose of demonstrating the divine origin of the doctrine in question. It is *mediate* if the miracle is primarily intended to establish the divine mission of the one who proclaims the doctrine. Mediate is quite as valuable as immediate confirmation, since it is evident that God would not confirm as His messenger anyone who proclaimed a false doctrine.

3. Once a doctrine has been confirmed by a miracle, the confirmation remains valid for all time.

Miracles evidently wrought in confirmation of the supernatural divine origin of a doctrine must be regarded as a valid and an unex-

ceptionable proof of its truth. This thesis is based upon the omniscience and veracity of God.

God is infinite truth, and, as such, can neither deceive nor be deceived, for both mendacity and gullibility are contrary to His essence. Hence God cannot positively confirm the testimony of a liar, as He would do if He supported with His omnipotence a man who falsely claimed to be His messenger and undertook to work a miracle to establish his claim. By working a miracle in favor of such a deceiver, God would aid and abet criminal conduct and proclaim falsehood as truth, which would be absolutely contrary to His veracity. Whenever, therefore, the message of a man who claims to be sent by God is confirmed by a genuine miracle, that message must be true and the messenger is trustworthy, for he bears the divine seal.

Objections / Refuted

1. D. F. STRAUSS maintains that the argument based on miracles proves nothing because it moves in a vicious circle. "That a doctrine is divine," he says, "is proved by miracles; but that these miracles are of divine and not of dia-

bolic origin, I am expected to deduce from the doctrine itself.”⁶⁷

Criticism.—It is true that Catholic apologists sometimes employ miracles as criteria of doctrines and, *vice versa*, doctrines as criteria of miracles. But in doing so they do not move in a vicious circle; as would be the case if, in judging of miracles, they postulated the divinity of the doctrine in behalf of which these miracles are wrought, and which is to be demonstrated through them. We Catholics do not argue thus. We simply investigate a doctrine as contained in historically trustworthy sources and judge it in the light of reason. If we discover no contradiction, and see that the doctrine is in conformity with the moral law of nature, we conclude that it may be divinely revealed and, consequently, confirmed by miracles. The quality of the doctrine which miracles are designed to confirm is one of the criteria by which we distinguish the genuine from the spurious. If to this argument are added others, which in their totality establish the conviction that a genuine miracle has been wrought, we justly regard

⁶⁷ *Die christliche Glaubenslehre*, Vol. I, Tübingen, 1840, pp. 224 sq.

that miracle as a decisive proof for the divine origin of the doctrine.

2. G. E. LESSING denies the validity of miracles (and prophecies) as motives of credibility for the reason that "accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason. I do not at all deny that prophecies were fulfilled in Christ," he says; "I do not deny that he wrought miracles; but I *do* deny that these miracles, the truth of which is not confirmed by any miracles wrought at the present time, and which, therefore, are nothing more than reports (no matter how uncontradicted and irrefutable) of past miracles, can compel me to believe in Christ's other teachings."⁶⁸

Criticism.—The principle enunciated by Lessing must be admitted in the sense that the conclusion of a syllogism can never claim a higher degree of certainty than the premisses from which it is derived. If these premisses possess only moral certainty, then no physical or metaphysical certainty can attach to the conclusion. But it is *not* true, as Lessing contends, that historical evidence, which by its very nature produces moral certitude only, can never become the basis of an absolute obligation. True, there

⁶⁸ *Über den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft, Werke*, ed. Laube, Vol. IV, p. 109.

are a great many historical reports to which we need pay no attention in ordering our philosophy and conduct; but there are others which involve a strict and universal obligation. To this latter class belong the reports concerning the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ. That these miracles actually occurred, Lessing himself admits to be historically certain. As they were admittedly wrought for the purpose of showing that Christ was sent by God, equipped with divine power to teach and legislate for the entire human race, it is historically certain that Christ came on earth as a teacher and lawgiver, to whom men owe submission. That the certainty upon which this obligation rests is purely moral, excuses no one from the duty of obedience, for moral certainty excludes all reasonable doubt. Whenever a man would have to act contrary to his reason in order to escape an obligation, the moral law of nature demands submission. We all follow this rule in everyday life. A child is obliged to obey his parents. This obligation presupposes that the persons whom he regards as such are really his parents. Of this fact, however, a child can never have more than a moral certitude. Consequently, the child's duty towards his parents has for its foundation moral certitude only. Similarly every citizen is obliged

to obey laws, the existence of which, as a rule, is for him purely a matter of moral certainty. Human nature is so constituted that the absolute requirements of the moral law, upon the fulfillment of which the development and perfection of mankind depend, rest largely upon moral certainty as the basis of obligation.

2. Lessing's second argument against the conclusive force of miracles is that "their truth is not confirmed by miracles wrought at the present time." This statement has no objective foundation. As soon as it is certain that a duly accredited historical event was a genuine miracle, and that this miracle was wrought to confirm the supernatural origin of a new religion, we are no longer permitted to doubt the divine character of that religion, but must accept it with all the doctrines and precepts which it proposes.

In matter of fact, however, for the sake of human weakness, God in His goodness continues to work miracles which can stand the acid test of criticism.

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⁶⁹ On the importance of the *Summa contra Gentiles* in the history of Fundamental Theology, see Volume I of this *Handbook*,

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F. HETTINGER, *Lehrbuch der Fundamentaltheologie*, 3rd p. 35. Father Rickaby, in translating the chapters of the *S. c. G.* cited above, has prudently excised much obsolete physics. "To examine the plan of creation in an age when men knew nothing of physical nature, microscopic and telescopic, molecular and siderial, beyond what their unassisted senses could detect," he says in a footnote (*God and His Creatures*, p. 262), "was a laudable effort, but could lead to no more than provisional results. A modern Aquinas, dwelling, as St. Thomas loved to dwell, on the variety of creation and the differences of things, cannot but feel himself in face of the question, how all these differences arose; whether they were explicit in the first creation, or, whether, out of a creation originally homogeneous, things came to be differentiated by a primitive plastic power, called Evolution, which has turned out an oak, or a sycamore, to be head and representative of one line of development, and a lion, or an eagle, of another. And, if he chooses evolution, he will have to consider the part of God's providence therein."

138 *Nature and Conditions of Revelation*

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§ III. PROPHECIES

I. Definition of Prophecy

A prophecy, broadly speaking, is a prediction of some future contingent event which cannot be foreseen by purely natural means. For a more accurate definition we have to fall back upon Sacred Scripture. The Hebrew *nēbhu'ah* (from *nabha'* = to spring forth like water from a fountain, to speak; Greek *ῥέω*) is rendered in the

Septuagint by *προφητεία* (from *προφάναι* = *to speak for someone, to act as interpreter*.⁷⁰)

The fundamental meaning of the word is indicated in Exodus VII, 1: "*Aaron frater tuus erit propheta tuus* (Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet)" and IV, 16: "*Ipse loquetur pro te ad populum, et erit os tuum* (he shall speak in thy stead to the people, and shall be thy mouth.)"

Throughout the Bible *προφητεία*, like the Latin *prophetia*, is employed in a threefold meaning, to wit:

a) In the broad sense of speaking enthusiastically, under divine inspiration, of things pertaining to God. Such speech may contain an explanation of divine utterances, praise of God, or moral instructions addressed to the people, as in Num. XI, 25-29; 1 Par. XXV, 1-3; 1 Kings XI, 4 sq.; XIV, 1-5, 24, 31, 39.

b) In a narrower sense the term prophecy signifies the communication of hidden things, no matter whether they belong to the past, the present, or the future, as in Matt. XXVI, 68.

c) In the strict and ordinary sense prophecy means the prediction of future events which can-

⁷⁰ Cfr. Zorell, *Novi Testamenti Lexicon Graecum*, Paris, 1911, p. 497; M. Hagen, S.J., *Lexicon Biblicum*, Vol. III, Paris, 1911, pp. 687 sqq.; R. Cornely, S.J., *Introductio in U. T. Libros Sacros*, Vol. II, Paris, 1887, pp. 267 sqq.

not be foreknown by natural means. (Cfr. Mark X, 32-34). It is in this sense that we employ the term here.

A prophecy in theological parlance is *the certain and definite prediction, based upon divine causality and fulfilled in time, of future events which cannot be foreknown from natural causes.* If a prophecy is to be accepted as a criterion of revelation, we must add to this definition the phrase, "*and which serves as a proof of the divine origin of a revealed doctrine.*"

1. The *object* of prophecy is a future event which cannot be foretold from its natural causes. To this category belong primarily all future events that depend solely upon the free will of God or man.⁷¹ Concerning such an event no

⁷¹Of course, we must not conceive of the divine will as arbitrary. "In these days," says Fr. Rickaby, "when the great philosophic difficulty against theism is the prevalence of evil, it is of the first importance to beware of any theistic statement which seems to represent God as mere Will, arbitrary, unconditioned, and untrammelled by any regard to the eternal fitnesses and possibilities of nature. In the presence of evils such as we daily experience, to ally such sheer, imperious, overruling and overwhelming Will with Goodness, is a task which one shrinks from contemplating. Happily, it is not the task of the philosopher and the Christian. No lord paramount *θυμὸς* or *βούλησις* can run counter to the *εἶδη*. If we might put words into the mouth of our Creator, words suggested by our great dramatist, we might fancy God saying:

I can do all that doth become a God:
Who can do more, is none.

creature can pass a certain judgment, because the event does not as yet exist and cannot be deduced with necessity from its causes. A prophecy that deals with such things is called *absolute*. A prophecy is *relative* if it refers to future events (*e. g.*, an earthquake or a famine) the certain knowledge of which exceeds the intelligence of men, but not that of all created spirits.

2. The prediction which constitutes a prophecy must be *certain*, that is to say, the prophet must not merely venture a guess or express an opinion, but be positive and firmly convinced of the truth of what he foretells. However, it is not necessary that he have a perfectly clear conception of all the details of his prophecy.

3. The prediction must, moreover, be couched in *definite* terms. If it were equivocal, it would be possible to adapt the prophecy to subsequent events. The history of pagan manticism affords many examples of oracles which were so ambiguously phrased that they were sure to come true, no matter what happened.⁷²

That alone 'doth become a God,' which is consonant with the εἶδῃ, or fixed intelligible nature of things, which are the expressions of His nature as imitable beyond Himself. God is 'the first measure of every being and of every nature, by virtue of what He is Himself in His own being and His own nature, not by mere virtue of His will.' (*God and His Creatures*, p. 264, note.)

⁷² Here are a few of the best known oracles: "*Croesus Halyn penetrans magnam delebit opum vim*"; "*Aio te Aeacida (Pyrrhum)*

4. A prophecy must be *confirmed by the event*. Only after a prediction has come true can it be judged with certainty to have been, not an empty phrase, but a true prophecy. Needless to add, only a fulfilled prophecy can be utilized as a criterion of revelation.

5. A prophecy must be *traceable to God as its author*. An absolute prophecy, which deals with future free actions, must, in the nature of things, be the work of God. If it comes true, therefore, no further investigation is required as to its origin. A relative prophecy, on the other hand, may be the work of a created spirit. Consequently, when there is question of a relative prophecy, the first thing to make sure of is whether it is communicated to us by a good angel. In Sacred Scripture only those prophecies are regarded as genuine which come mediately or immediately from God. Any other prediction can be called a prophecy only in the improper sense of the term.⁷³

Romanos vincere posse"; "Ibis redibis nunquam peribis in armis." Cicero justly says (*De Divinatione*, II, 56): "Tuis [i. e., Apollinis] oraculis Chrysippus totum volumen implevit partim falsis, ut ego opinor, partim casu veris, ut fit in omni oratione sacpissime, partim flexiloquis et obscuris, ut interpretes egeat interprete et sors ipsa ad sortes referenda sit, partim ambiguis, et quae ad dialecticum deferendae sint." And in another passage (*ibid.*, 54): "Calpurnius, qui illa [i. e., Sibyllae dicta] composuit, perfecit, ut quodcumque accidisset, praedictum videretur."

⁷³ Cfr. the stereotyped phrase: "Haec dicit Dominus," or, "Fac-

2. *The Possibility of Prophecy*

1. Since prophecy proceeds from God and is fulfilled among men, its possibility must be demonstrated from a twofold point of view, the divine and the human.

2. Every prophecy, being a supernatural enrichment of human knowledge, is a miracle, and because of the divine communication of its content, involves a revelation. What we have said in a previous chapter about the possibility of miracles and of revelation in general, also applies to prophecy. But prophecy offers two new elements, of which we have not yet had an opportunity to treat, namely, (a) a foreknowledge of the future and (b) the connection between prophecy and the free will of man. Both these elements are embraced in the notion of prophecy, and hence the possibility of prophecy must be shown in regard to them. Remember that we are here speaking of *absolute* prophecy.

3. The possibility of prophecy was denied mainly by the Rationalists, who thought it endangered free will. Against these sceptics we maintain that prophecies are possible, first, on

tum est verbum Domini" in the prophetical writings of the Old Testament; Deut. XIII, 1 sqq.

the part of God, and, secondly, on the part of man.

a) *Prophecies are possible on the part of God.* This portion of our thesis can be proved from the perfection of the divine knowledge.

A prophecy, being a certain prediction of future events that cannot be known by natural means, presupposes a communication from God. Such a communication is possible if God knows with absolute certainty all future events, both those which are necessary and those which are contingent upon free-will decisions. That He possesses such a knowledge follows from the infinite perfection of the Divine Intellect. God, in the first place, knows from all eternity when and how He Himself is going to act. It would be contrary to the nature of the most perfect Being to operate unconsciously. Every divine act must be guided by clear and full knowledge. In addition to this, everything that happens or will happen in the future stands out clearly before the Divine Intellect from all eternity. Without this knowledge there could be no order in the world and no government worthy of the omnipotence and wisdom of the infinitely perfect Creator. If God is the ultimate cause of all being, as He must be if He is the most perfect Being, He must have predetermined the history

of the created universe in every detail. This would have been impossible had He not known in advance everything that was going to happen from the creation until the end of time. The knowledge of God, therefore, comprises the entire development of the universe, not only on the material, but also on the spiritual side, including the future free-will actions of angels and men. Consequently, prophecy is possible on the part of God. He needs only to communicate His knowledge of the future to a man by way of revelation (the possibility of which has been demonstrated above) to enable the latter to predict future events with certainty.

b) *Prophecies are possible also on the part of man*, as can be shown from the relation existing between prophecy and free will.

There is question here only of such prophecies as have free-will acts for their object. The liberty of the will is neither abolished nor limited by a prediction of future acts. For a free-will act is not performed because it has been predicted, but it could be predicted because some one knew it would be actually performed. Not the foreknowledge and previous announcement is the cause of the act, but the act is the cause of the foreknowledge and prediction.

In this connection it is well to remember, what

has been previously intimated, that God not only knows in advance all the future free actions of His rational creatures, but predetermines them and sees to it that they are executed in consonance with His decrees. Predetermination and Divine Providence no more spell interference with human liberty than does divine foreknowledge. For God, who is the adequate cause of all actuality, does not give the act detached from the operation of the free will of man, but with liberty as the proximate determination of its being. It is only in this way that God can operate as the universal cause of all things. His predetermination of all things does not infringe upon the freedom of the human will because, unlike man, He works from the inside.⁷⁴

3. *The Knowability of Prophecy*

1. The knowability of prophecy, like that of miracles, is either *historical* or *philosophical*.

Since prophecy, considered as a criterion of revelation, essentially comprises the fulfilment of the prediction made, a prophecy cannot be regarded as genuine unless it is certain that the

⁷⁴ On predestination versus free-will see Pohle-Preuss, *Grace, Actual and Habitual*, pp. 152, 187 sqq., 199 sqq., 206 sqq.

prediction actually preceded the event and that the latter could not possibly have been fore-known by natural means or brought about artificially either by the prophet himself or by accident.

When we say that prophecies are knowable, we do not mean that all prophecies can be known as such, but only that at least some of them can be recognized with certainty, and that there is nothing in the nature of a prophecy as such that conflicts with its cognoscibility.

2. We maintain that the historical actuality of a prophecy can at times be known for certain both by eye-witnesses of the event and by others.

a) Eye-witnesses can know the historical fulfilment of a prophecy with absolute certainty. They are present while the prophet is making his prediction, they see him, hear his words, and are in a position to make sure that he is foretelling a definite future event. Later, when that event happens, they can see the fulfilment of the prophecy with their own eyes and compare the prediction with the event.

b) Those contemporaries who are absent when a prophecy is made, and those who live at a later period, can obtain a reliable knowledge

of the facts and thus gain certainty concerning the prophecy and its fulfilment.

3. We maintain further that **the supernatural divine origin of a prophecy can be known with certainty.**

The proof for this proposition rests upon the relation of prophecy to the causes operating outside the Divine Essence.

The supernatural, divine origin of a prophecy is certain if the prediction is derived neither from human knowledge nor from demonic communication, and its fulfilment is not attributable to accident or deceit. This can be demonstrated with entire certainty in many cases.

a) *It can be demonstrated that a fulfilled prophecy was not the result of human prescience.* As a rule the purpose for which the prophecy is made shows this sufficiently. If the object of the prophecy consists in free future actions, either of God or man, human foreknowledge is absolutely excluded, especially if the circumstances of time, place, and manner accompanying the predicted event are stated in detail. But even if an event is produced by necessary causes (*e. g.*, an earthquake or a famine), it is impossible for any man to foretell it, especially if it lies far ahead in the future.

b) *It can be shown that a prophecy does not emanate from demonic sources.* In the case of absolute prophecies a diabolical origin is *per se* excluded. No created intellect, even though it immeasurably transcends that of man in depth, acumen, and power of combination, and even though it may have the experience of thousands of years to fall back upon, is in a position to predict with certainty acts that will be performed at some future time by God or by any rational creature endowed with free will.

In the case of relative prophecies the *attending circumstances* are the decisive factor. The person of the prophet, the manner in which he predicts the future, the purpose of the prediction and its effects will enable us to establish with certainty whether the prophecy is genuine or not,—always bearing in mind that God cannot permit men to be hopelessly misled in regard to a new religion.

c) *It can be shown, finally, that the fulfilment of a prophecy was not the result of an accident or of studied deception.* Accidental or artificial fulfilment of a prophecy is impossible when the predicted event transcends the powers of nature (as in restoring a dead man to life) or

when the prediction comprises details which have no necessary or moral connection one with the other.⁷⁵

If it is doubtful whether the fulfilment of a prediction has been brought about by accident or by artificial machinations on the part of the prophet, that particular prediction is not a prophecy that can be utilized as a criterion of divine revelation. For the rest, we may be sure that God in His wisdom and holiness will see to it that the spread of a false religion is not promoted by the accidental or artificial fulfilment of a false prophecy.

The *demonstrative force of prophecy* is equal to that of miracles. An absolute or a relative prophecy is a mediate or an immediate divine confirmation of the supernatural origin of a revealed doctrine. What has been said above about the conclusiveness of miracles applies with

⁷⁵ Cfr. Cicero, *De Divinatione*, l. I, 13: "Quidquam potest casu esse factum, quod habet in se omnes numeros veritatis? Quattuor tali iacti casu venerium efficiunt; num etiam centum venerios, si quadringentos talos ieceris, casu futuros putas? Aspersa temere pigmenta in tabula oris lineamenta efficere possunt; num etiam Veneris Coae pulchritudinem effici posse aspersione fortuito putas? Sus rostro si humi A litteram impresserit, num propterea suspicari poteris Andromacham Ennii ab ea posse describi?" And again (*ibid.*, 23): "Sic enim se profecto res habet ut nunquam perfecte veritatem casus imitetur."

equal force to prophecies, and hence we need not add anything to what we have already said on this head.

Pseudo-Prophecies

1. The cryptic utterances of the ancient pagan oracles, the predictions of the seeresses known as Sibyls, of whom there were at least ten in widely separate parts of the world (Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, etc.), and the modern phenomena of clairvoyance and "second sight" are often put on a level with the prophecies of the Bible. But this procedure is absolutely unjustifiable, as a short comparison will show.

The predictions of the ancient oracles were commonly rough-cast, obscure, and enigmatical. Of those that were definite, some lay entirely within the range of human knowledge; others, though exceeding the limits of that knowledge, did not transcend the ken of a pure spirit. The agents who answered questions or revealed hidden knowledge at the place where the oracles were given cannot have been good spirits. This is evident from the fact that these institutions were the most powerful supports of paganism. The manner in which the mediums (priests or priestesses) answered the questions or petitions addressed to the oracle, indicates the influence of demonic powers where all natural explanations fail. Thus the Pythia at Delphi, the most famous oracle of the ancient world, sat upon a golden tripod, inhaled the intoxicating vapors that rose from the spring, chewed the narcotic laurel berry, drank of the Castalian spring—a fountain sacred to the god Apollo on Mount Parnassus—and uttered mystic words, which were inter-

preted and arranged by "prophets" specially trained for the purpose.⁷⁶

The etymology of the word *Sibyls* is obscure. They were half historical, half mythical seeresses or prophetesses, believed to be inspired by a deity. Heraclitus, a philosopher of the fifth century B. C., mentions one Sibyl. Varro, the great Roman polymath, knew ten. The most famous was the Erythrean Sibyl, whom Pausanias assigns to the period of the Trojan War. The Sibyls either lived in grottos or travelled about the country. Only scant fragments are preserved of their oracles. An ancient collection of *Sibylline Books*, so called, was kept in a stone chest in the temple of Jupiter

⁷⁶ Cfr. Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*, Vol. I, pp. 221 sqq. Virgil thus describes the frenzied condition of the Sibyl, when about to deliver her response (*Aeneid*, Dryden's tr., VI, 72-81):

"Her colour changed; her face was not the same;
And hollow groans from her deep spirit came.
Her hair stood up; convulsive rage possessed
Her trembling limbs, and heaved her labouring breast;
Greater than human kind she seemed to look;
And with an accent more than mortal spoke:
Her staring eyes with sparkling fury roll;
When all the god came rushing on her soul.
Swiftly she turned, and, foaming as she spoke:
"Why this delay? (she cried) the powers invoke!"

The oracles were so contrived as to fit all possible cases, or, as Cicero says, so that whatever took place might seem to have been predicted, inasmuch as all accurate information of persons and times was wanting. The composer, he adds, took shelter in obscurity, so that the same verses might be accommodated to a variety of periods and objects (*De Divin.*, l. II, 54); or, as Boethius, commenting on Plutarch, expresses himself, "the authors poured out words and phrases combined at hazard into the sea of undefined time in such a way that their fulfilment was sheer accident." (Plut., *Marc.*, 3; *Quaest. Rom.*, 83).

at Rome and destroyed by fire in the year 83 B. C. A late collection, made under the auspices of the Roman Senate, was burnt by Stilicho at the beginning of the fifth century. Of the fragments of Sibylline verses that have come down to us, only a few antedate the third century B. C. The majority were composed partly by Christian and partly by Jewish writers, who incorporated into their lines some genuine pagan oracles, either in their original form or in a later redaction. It is impossible to determine at the present time which portions are of Christian, which of Jewish, and which of pagan provenience, and this uncertainty is one reason among several why the Sibylline oracles cannot justly be put on a level with the prophecies of the Bible.⁷⁷

2. *Clairvoyance* is defined as the faculty of perceiving things without the use of the organ of sight or under conditions in which the eye with its natural powers would be useless. Clairvoyance extends to past, present, and future events. Various methods are employed by its practitioners. Some see by direct vision at a distance (opaque substances being no hindrance); others look into a black surface, or into water, or into a crystal; others describe objects laid on the forehead or chest, and so forth. Too little is known about the predictions of clairvoyants to enable us to form an opinion of their nature and value. Forel admits that the alleged preternatural phenomena of clairvoyance are not yet sufficiently investigated.⁷⁸

3. More closely akin to prophecy is the phenomenon of

⁷⁷ Cfr. E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. III, 4th ed., Leipzig, 1909, pp. 555 sqq.; Döllinger, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 112 sqq.; Maase, *De Sibyllarum Indicibus*, 1879; Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*, 1898; J. P. Arendzen, *Men and Manners in the Days of Christ*, London, 1928, pp. 136 sqq.

⁷⁸ A. Forel, *Der Hypnotismus*, 10th ed., Stuttgart, 1921, pp. 47

second sight, of which many cases are on record, especially in Scotland and Westphalia (Germany). Second sight is an extraordinary power of vision, physical or mental, possessed by certain individuals, whereby they are enabled to see things happening at a distance, or to foresee future events, especially deaths, funerals, conflagrations, and the accompanying circumstances. This sight never extends beyond living persons and material objects,—*phantasms of the living*, as they are called in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research. No sufficient explanation of this strange power has as yet been found. Many of the phenomena ascribed to second sight are probably attributable to hallucinations. But not all of them can be explained thus. There are well attested cases in which future events were foreseen and predicted with remarkable accuracy and a wealth of detail. They are too numerous to be brushed aside as mere accidents. But how is second sight to be explained? Man's ordinary faculties of acquiring knowledge do not offer a sufficient explanation. Divine influence cannot be admitted, since the objects of second sight are too common, and no purpose worthy of a miracle is discernible. The only remaining sup-

sq.: "*Zweifelhaft, wenigstens weder wissenschaftlich genügend erhärtet noch erklärt, sind angebliche übersinnliche Tatsachen, wie das sogenannte Hellsehen oder die Telepathie, die sogenannte direkte Gedankenübertragung u. dgl. m. Bei den seltenen Personen, bei welchen solche Experimente gelingen sollen, scheint eine streng wissenschaftliche, jede Möglichkeit unbewusster Eingebung ausschliessende Kontrolle meistens gefehlt zu haben, und da, wo sie stattfand, meistens ein vollständiges Fiasko der Experimente die gewöhnliche Folge der Experimente gewesen zu sein.*" Cfr. E. L. Fischer, *Der sog. Lebensmagnetismus oder Hypnotismus*, Mayence, 1883, p. 55; C. Gutberlet, *Apologetik*, Vol. II, 4th ed., pp. 195 sqq.; R. Tischner, *Über Telepathie und Hellsehen*, Munich, 1920.

position would seem to be the influence of pure created spirits. That these have the power to produce the phenomena of second sight cannot be doubted. But one can perceive no adequate reason why they should exercise such an activity. Since second sight usually is not productive of any particular good, be it physical or moral, and its effects are quite indifferent, we cannot reasonably assume that the angels have a hand in it. Nor are there any stringent reasons for postulating the co-operation of evil spirits. Hence, we must set aside second sight as an enigma which cannot as yet be satisfactorily explained.

This admission, however, in no wise affects the evidential value of prophecy. For in order to employ prophecy as a criterion of revelation, we need not explain the nature of all the phenomena that in some way resemble it, but it suffices to show that prophecy is a criterion of revelation and can be established as genuine.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Cfr. C. Gutberlet, *Apologetik*, Vol. II, 4th ed., pp. 185 sqq.; W. Ludwig, *Spaziergänge eines Wahrheitssuchers ins Reich der Mystik*, Leipsic, 1890; M. Perty, *Über die mystischen Erscheinungen der menschlichen Natur*, 2nd ed., Leipsic, 1872; J. B. Becker, *Die Weissagungen als Kriterien der Offenbarung*, Mayence, 1890, pp. 167 sqq.; Fr. Zurbonsen, *Das zweite Gesicht (die "Vorgeschichten") nach Wirklichkeit und Wesen*, 5th ed., Cologne, 1921. Dr. Zurbonsen, who has studied the phenomenon of *second sight* very carefully, arrives at the following conclusions: (1) Second sight is the sudden emergence of a clairvoyant dream into a waking condition. (2) It represents a strong presentiment arising out of the subliminal consciousness of the soul, which presentiment (3) shapes itself in an explosive manner into a picture of the foreboded reality. (4) The phenomenon probably is caused by a sudden immersion of the soul into the universe, whereby the slumbering faculty of prescience is transformed into prevision. (5) Second sight permits us to conclude that the soul is infinitely spiritual, but in itself is an abnormal psychological phenomenon,

READINGS

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H. DENZINGER, *Vier Bücher von der religiösen Erkenntnis*, Vol. II, Würzburg, 1856, pp. 402 sqq.

C. GUTBERLET, *Lehrbuch der Apologetik*, Vol. II, 4th ed., Münster i. W., 1922, pp. 147-212.

F. KNABENBAUER, *Orakel und Prophetie*, Passau, 1881.

H. WEISS, *Die messianischen Vorbilder im Alten Testament*, Freiburg i. B., 1905.

J. B. BECKER, *Die Weissagungen als Kriterien der Offenbarung*, Mayence, 1890.

based on the dislocation of intellectual powers. Msgr. Gutberlet substantially agrees with these conclusions, though he does not regard them as entirely satisfactory, because they do not explain the proper essence of the phenomenon. "The difficulty," he says, "lies in the certain foreknowledge of events in their minutest details. . . . The 'immersion of the soul in the universe' cannot furnish this knowledge, and the soul is not endowed with an infinite spirituality which would enable it to foresee objects and events that do not as yet exist. This power can only be ascribed to a spirit who is equally present to all divisions of time from all eternity. It must be admitted that truth also transcends time from all eternity; this is confirmed by the phenomena of second sight; but the question at issue is: How does it come into the soul of the seer? The truth is not in the universe, but has a purely ideal existence, and consequently cannot be perceived by immersion into the universe. In any event, the faculty of second sight cannot enter into competition with the miracles of Christianity, for second sight is limited to a few objects and to definite places and nations, shows a certain conformity to law, and hence points to a natural origin. Christian miracles are found everywhere and in connection with all possible kinds of events." (Gutberlet, *Lehrbuch der Apologetik*, Vol. II, 4th ed., Münster i. W., 1922, p. 194).

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PART II

EXISTENCE AND DIVINE ORIGIN OF REVELATION

INTRODUCTION

In the first part of this volume we have studied the nature and conditions of supernatural revelation; now we come to the question of its existence and divine origin. Objectively the existence or historical actuality and the divine origin of revelation coincide; but notionally they can be distinguished, and it will be in the interest of clarity to treat them separately. This second part of our treatise, therefore, will comprise two chapters, of which the first will deal with the existence or historical actuality of revelation, and the second with its divine origin.

In employing the term "revelation" in this part of our treatise, we refer not so much to the activity of God in revealing, as to the subject-matter revealed. This is for the most part deposited in the writings which constitute the Bible. In order, therefore, to demonstrate the existence or historical actuality of revelation, we have first to prove the genuineness and credibility of the Bible. If this point is established, the reliability and truth of the contents of the Sacred Book follow as a matter of course.

The Catholic Church teaches that revelation is not only contained in the Bible, but also comprises many truths which, though not embodied in Sacred Scripture, have been handed down by ecclesiastical tradition. Of these latter truths we shall treat in Volumes III and IV of this Handbook, in connection with the Church and the ecclesiastical teaching office.

1. The Old Testament

The Revelation contained in the Old Testament, in contradistinction to that of the New Testament, is frequently referred to as *pre-Christian*. This does not mean that there is any opposition between the two. On the contrary, pre-Christian and Christian revelation stand in an intimate relationship to each other. Both have their goal and center in Jesus Christ. The relation of pre-Christian to Christian revelation is that of the imperfect to the perfect, of the preparation to the consummation, of the promise to the fulfilment. Both together form a divine guidance of mankind, which finds its culmination in Jesus Christ.

The pre-Christian revelation of the Old Testament falls naturally into three divisions: primitive, patriarchal, and Mosaic.

1. *Primitive Revelation* extends from the creation of the world to Abraham. It embraces the doctrine that there is but one God, the Creator of Heaven and earth, who is a personal Being, Lord of the world and Ruler of mankind. Immediately after the Fall of our First Parents, the Old Testament, in its prophecy of the seed of the woman who was to crush the head of the serpent, held out the prospect of a *Redeemer*.¹

2. During the era of the *Patriarchs*, from Abraham to Moses, God addressed Himself to one particular people only, the descendants of Abraham, and gradually unveiled to them the picture of the Messias. He promised Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be blessed in his seed.² This promise was repeated to Abraham's son, Isaac, and to his grandson, Jacob.³ Inspired by God, Jacob announced at the end of his life that "the sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations."⁴

3. The *Mosaic Revelation* comprises the period from Moses to Jesus Christ, and may be

¹ Gen. III, 15.

² Gen. XII, 3; XXII, 18.

³ Gen. XXVI, 4; XXVIII, 14.

⁴ Gen. XLIX, 10.

divided into the Pentateuchal (so called because it is contained in the four last books of the Pentateuch) and the prophetic.

a) The *Pentateuchal Revelation* was transmitted to the Israelites almost exclusively by a prophet whom God sent for this particular purpose, namely, Moses. It consists partly of doctrines and partly of practical precepts. The *doctrines* refer to God and His relation to man. God reveals Himself as *Yahweh*, the absolute Being.⁵ The divine attributes, too, omnipotence, omniscience, eternity, wisdom, sanctity, justice, mercy, and fidelity are more clearly revealed,⁶ God appearing as the Creator, the Preserver, and the Ruler of the universe, as the Lord and Judge of men.⁷ Man stands in a most intimate relation to Him, is loved by God, and obliged to love Him in return, to keep His commandments, and to strive to be holy as He is holy.⁸

The precepts of the *Mosaic law* are partly *ethical*, designed to regulate man's conduct towards

⁵ Ex. III, 14: God said to Moses: "I am who am." Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God, His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes*, pp. 165 sqq.

⁶ Ex. XV, 1-19; XXXIV, 6 sq.; Deut. XXXII, 1-43. On the divine attributes see Pohle-Preuss, *op. cit.*, pp. 177 sqq.

⁷ Ex. XX, 1-17; Deut. IV, 35-39.

⁸ Deut. X, 12-22; Lev. XX, 26. Cfr. Koch-Preuss, *A Handbook of Moral Theology*, Vol. IV, "Man's Duties to God," 2nd ed., St. Louis, 1921.

God and his fellowmen; ⁹ partly *ritual* or *cere-monial*, governing the manner of divine worship; ¹⁰ and partly *civil* or *political*, ordering the social relations of the Jews.¹¹

Two prophecies made at this time clearly point to a coming Redeemer; one of them represents Him as a star arising out of Jacob,¹² while the other describes Him as a great prophet like Moses.¹³

b) The revelation given through the *prophets* develops these ideas and promises, especially that of a Redeemer, more fully. The series of prophets as bearers of divine revelation begins with Samuel, towards the end of the period of the Judges, and concludes a short time after the

⁹ Deut. VI, 5; XIII; Lev. XIX, 18; Ex. XX, 13-17; XXI; XXII; XXIII, 1-12; Deut. XV.

¹⁰ Lev., *passim*.

¹¹ Ex. XXI; XXII; Deut. XV and XIX sqq.

¹² Numb. XXIV, 17. Balaam, called upon by the King of Moab to curse the Hebrews, who, about to enter the Promised Land, were menacing his territory, on the contrary blessed them in four successive oracles, the last of which clearly has a Messianic import:

"I shall see him, but not now.

I shall behold him, but not near.

A star shall rise out of Jacob

And a scepter shall spring up from Israel."

It is, in effect, a repetition of Jacob's prophecy. Cfr. L. C. Fillion, *The Life of Christ*, tr. by N. Thompson, Vol. I, St. Louis, 1928, p. 215.

¹³ Deut. XVIII, 15.

Babylonian exile with Malachias. The picture of the Messiah drawn by the prophets gradually grows more and more distinct. His person,¹⁴ His various offices,¹⁵ His death,¹⁶ and the time of His appearance in the world,¹⁷ are the outstanding features of the prophetical writings of the Old Testament.

Thus the Chosen People were being slowly prepared and trained for the reception of the more perfect Christian revelation that was to follow.

2. The New Testament

The revelation of the New Testament, called Christian because it was communicated to mankind through Jesus Christ, is contained mainly in the Four Gospels, which are supplemented by the Acts of the Apostles (written by St. Luke), twenty-one Apostolic Epistles, and the Apocalypse of St. John.

The revelation given through Jesus Christ is the continuation and completion of the pre-Christian revelation of the Old Testament, and,

¹⁴ Is. IX, 6; Mich. V, 2; Jer. XXIII, 5; Mal. III, 1; Is. XLII 1 sqq.

¹⁵ Ps. II, 6; LXXI; Jer. XXIII, 5; Is. XLII, 1 sqq.

¹⁶ Ps. XXI; Dan. IX, 24 sqq.; Is. LII, 13 to LIII, 12.

¹⁷ Dan. IX, 24 sqq.; Agg. II, 7 sqq.; Mal. III, 1.

unlike the latter, is addressed to the whole of mankind.

Christ instructed men concerning the infinite value of their immortal souls; ¹⁸ He taught them to regard God as their Father and themselves as His children,—not, as in the Old Testament, on account of the external bond of membership in the Chosen People, but because they are expected to conform themselves interiorly to Him ¹⁹ and because the love of the Heavenly Father for His only-begotten Son includes those who believe in the latter.²⁰ Christ called God His Father in a much higher sense than we can do so,²¹ in fact He declared Himself to be consubstantial, *i. e.*, of the same essence with the Father,²² and said that the Father dwelled in Him and He in the Father.²³ Later He revealed to His disciples the existence of a Third Person in the Godhead, namely, the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from both the Father and the Son.²⁴ Thus for the first time the dogma of the Trinity

¹⁸ Matt. XVI, 26.

¹⁹ Matt. V, 45-48.

²⁰ John XVII, 26.

²¹ Matt. XI, 27; Luke X, 22.

²² John X, 30.

²³ John XIV, 10 sq.

²⁴ John XV, 26; Matt. XXVIII, 19; cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *The Divine Trinity*, pp. 169 sqq.

was fully revealed; there had been only faint traces of it in the Old Testament.²⁵

The Son of God is the Redeemer of mankind. He "is come to save that which was lost."²⁶ He will shed His blood "for many unto remission of sins," and will establish "a new testament,"²⁷ and thereby break the dominion of Satan, "the prince of this world," with whom death and sin originated.²⁸

Although He was the Founder of a new covenant, Jesus Christ did not wish to destroy the Old Testament, but to "fulfil the law and the prophets."²⁹ The law of Moses He fulfilled by obeying its precepts³⁰ and teaching men a more perfect and more reasonable mode of observance.³¹ But at the same time He declared that He was greater than the law³² and with the

²⁵ Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *The Divine Trinity*, pp. 11 sqq.; F. McGloin, *The Mystery of the Holy Trinity in Oldest Judaism*, Philadelphia, 1916; J. Lebreton, *Les Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, Vol. I, 6th ed., Paris, 1927, pp. 100-141.

²⁶ Matt. XVIII, 11; Luke XIX, 10.

²⁷ Matt. XXVI, 26 sqq.; Luke XXII, 19 sq.

²⁸ John VIII, 44; XII, 31; XVI, 11; cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Soteriology*, pp. 84 sqq.; Koch-Preuss, *A Handbook of Moral Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 11 sqq.

²⁹ Matt. V, 17.

³⁰ Matt. XXVI, 17 sqq.; VIII, 4.

³¹ Matt. XXII, 36 sqq.; XV, 3 sq.

³² Mark II, 28; Matt. XII, 6 sqq.

authority of an all-powerful legislator not only opposed the narrow-minded interpretations of the Pharisees, but abrogated portions of the law itself.³³ In doing this He desired to show that the time had come when the Old Law was to assume a more perfect form and the worship of God³⁴ and the observance of the moral precepts would no longer be limited by national boundaries, thereby fulfilling the predictions of the prophets about the Messias and His universal kingdom.³⁵

Christ came to found a new kingdom which was "not of this world."³⁶ He called it sometimes the "Kingdom of God," sometimes the "Kingdom of Heaven." His chief mission was to announce the Gospel ("glad tidings") of this Kingdom.³⁷ The Kingdom of God began with John the Baptist, He said;³⁸ it was destined to spread far and wide among the nations and to

³³ Matt. V, 27-47; Mark X, 11 sq.; cfr. Koch-Preuss, *A Handbook of Moral Theology*, Vol. I, pp. 135 sqq., 146.

³⁴ John IV, 21-24.

³⁵ Cfr. K. Benz, *Die Stellung Jesu zum alttestamentlichen Gesetz* (*Biblische Studien*, ed. by O. Bardenhewer, XIX, 1), Freiburg i. B., 1914.

³⁶ John XVIII, 36.

³⁷ Luke IV, 43.

³⁸ Matt. XI, 12; Luke XVI, 16.

endure to the end of time.³⁹ He commissioned Peter to govern this Kingdom⁴⁰ and instructed him to continue His mission together with the other Apostles for the salvation of mankind.⁴¹ The Jewish Synagogue was to be gradually absorbed by the universal Church established by Christ. Those Old Testament institutions and precepts which, like the ceremonial and judicial laws of Moses, had been particular and national in character and were intended to serve merely as a preparation for the Messianic age, had now to disappear. But whatever was of universal and permanent value, like the precepts of the moral law, received its completion and higher sanction in the Christian Church.

³⁹ Matt. XXVIII, 19 sq.

⁴⁰ John XXI, 15 sqq.; cfr. Vols. III and IV of this *Handbook*.

⁴¹ John XX, 21.



CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL ACTUALITY OF REVELATION

As has been observed above, there is a logical distinction between the historical actuality and the divine origin of revelation. In this chapter we are concerned solely with the existence or objective truth of revelation. Our present task, therefore, is to ascertain whether the doctrines revealed in the Old and New Testaments were actually communicated to men and whether the events connected with their communication form a part of the authentic history of that time.

The certitude which we can obtain on this head is called historical or, in consideration of its basis, moral. It is a true certitude, that is, a real assent of the mind given without fear of error. While metaphysical certitude presupposes the general laws of being, and physical certitude postulates the immutability of the laws of nature, moral certitude, as its name indicates, is grounded upon the constancy of the laws which govern the conduct of free rational beings. In

the present connection we regard the moral law from one point of view only, to wit, in as far as it regulates man's striving after the truth. It expresses itself in the fact that every normal man has a natural inclination to acknowledge and proclaim the truth, and that he will not resort to lies and deception except when impelled to do so by a special motive strong enough to push his will in a direction opposite to that indicated by the law of nature. "*Nemo gratis mendax.*"¹

Of the different historical sources at our disposal we shall employ almost exclusively written tradition as contained in the books of the Old and New Testament, together with a few extra-biblical, partly Jewish and partly pagan documents. Both the Old and the New Testament, according to Catholic teaching, were written at the special instigation of God, under the impulse of supernatural inspiration. However, we shall here consider them merely as historical sources, not as divinely inspired books, since this is a point which remains to be proved.

Upon the character of these sources, their value and reliability, depends the degree of cer-

¹ Cfr. Ch. de Smedt, *Principes de la Critique Historique*, Liège and Paris, 1883, pp. 60 sq.; A. Feder, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methodik*, 2nd ed., Ratisbon, 1921, pp. 212 sqq.

titude which we can obtain regarding the facts of sacred history. Only if the genuineness and credibility of the sources is absolutely beyond doubt, can the facts reported therein be accepted as certain. Hence, the genuineness and credibility of the Bible, in general and in particular, will form the subject of our next inquiry.

§ I. GENUINENESS AND CREDIBILITY OF THE BIBLE IN GENERAL

I. Genuineness of the Bible

A historical document is called genuine "if it actually is what it is commonly believed to be."² More definitely we can say that the genuineness of a document consists in this that it is written by the author whose name it bears and at the time to which it is generally ascribed. This quality is also called authenticity. Note, however, that historical authenticity differs from doctrinal authenticity, which latter consists in the essentially correct reproduction of an inspired Biblical text and rests solely upon a declaration made by the Church.³

² E. Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, 6th ed., Leipzig, 1908, p. 330.

³ Cfr. *Kirchen-Lexikon*, 2nd ed., Vol. I, col. 1730; *Catholic En-*

In demonstrating the genuineness or authenticity of the various books of the Bible it cannot be our task to show that the original text was genuine. The text has come down to us only in copies and translations, and it is the authenticity of these copies and translations that is the question at issue. The present versions of the books of Sacred Scripture admittedly do not agree in every minute detail with the original text. The constant multiplication of copies and versions has resulted in a large number of variant readings. However, these variants are not important, as there is perfect agreement in every essential detail. That the most ancient extant codices, which date from the fourth and fifth centuries, agree substantially with the originals, is proved by the Scriptural citations found scattered through the works of Philo, Flavius Josephus, and other ancient writers, as well as by

cyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 137; Vol. XIII, p. 639; Vol. XIV, p. 531; H. Pope, *The Catholic Student's "Aids" to the Study of the Bible*, revised edition, Vol. I, The Old Testament (General), London, 1926, pp. 230 sqq. There is also a distinction between historical authenticity and genuineness. A genuine work is one written by the author whose name it bears; an authentic work is one which relates truthfully the matter of which it treats. Authenticity refers to truth in fact; genuineness to truth in origin (authorship). See the *Century* (s. v. "Authentic" and quotation by Bp. Watson.) The distinction can also be found in Hurter (*Theol. Dogmat. Comp.*, 12th ed., Vol. I, p. 39).

the fact that the Bible was in constant public use, and the Church from the very beginning of her existence watched with the greatest solicitude over the preservation of the text. All we have to show, therefore, is that the books constituting the Old and New Testaments were written at the time to which they are commonly ascribed and by the authors whose names they bear.

The genuineness of these books can be demonstrated in a twofold way, namely, by means of external testimonies and from internal criteria.

2. Credibility of the Bible

The credibility of a book is based on the character of its author. If he has reliable knowledge of the things he writes about, and is minded to tell the truth, he is credible, *i. e.*, deserving of belief. To test the credibility of a historic narrative, therefore, it is sufficient to answer these two questions: (1) Was the author in a position to know the truth? (2) Was he willing to tell the truth?

1. In order to answer the former question, we must inquire whether the author, if he claims to speak as an eye-witness, actually lived at the time when the event took place, whether he was present when it happened, and whether his po-

sition and environment were favorable for accurate observation. Other factors to be taken into consideration are: the author's power of observation and his understanding of the things which he reports. If he has employed extraneous sources, it becomes necessary to ascertain the reliability of the latter.

In making this investigation we must remember that an absolutely perfect reproduction of an event is hardly possible. The limitations of his senses do not permit man to perceive all the details of an event completely and with unerring accuracy. Hence the impression which an external occurrence makes upon the observer, as a rule, does not fully correspond to the reality. That which strikes the attention most powerfully is remembered, while the rest is forgotten. The imagination frequently influences sense perception, especially when fear or lively expectation are at work. Nor are the ideas formed in the mind, and the written narrative that is based upon them, capable of furnishing a perfect reproduction of the actual facts. The work of even the most objective historian necessarily has a strong subjective tinge. Absolute objectivity is and remains an ideal which should be striven for, but can never be fully attained.

2. In answering the second question, attention must above all be paid to the *moral character of the witness*, and especially to his veracity, which is just as important as his intellectual capacity. Since the soul of man is created for, and naturally strives after truth, intentional deception on the part of a witness, prompting him to falsify and misrepresent the facts, cannot be assumed without weighty reasons. Of course, if a writer is convicted of intentional deception, he loses the right to be trusted.

3. The *veracity of a witness* can best be ascertained from his life and character. If no information is available on these points, we must try to utilize the indications contained in his writings. We must inquire what was the *attitude* of the witness towards the facts which he reports. Even where no deception is intended, *prejudice, passion, partisanship, selfishness*, or some other improper motive may influence a writer and cause him to see the facts in a false light. The surest guarantee of accuracy is offered by those documents which show the least traces of self-seeking on the part of the witness.

4. It is a sign of trustworthiness if an account is transmitted in two or more mutually independent sources, for two or more witnesses will

hardly invent the same story independently of each other, or distort the truth in exactly the same way. Even more important for the evaluation of historical sources is their agreement with coins, inscriptions, and other relics of the age in which the events are reported to have occurred.

If two or more witnesses do not agree, the contradiction is often only apparent and traceable to one-sided observation. If the evidence cannot be harmonized from this point of view, and if there are no adequate means available to ascertain the truth, it is necessary to suspend one's judgment regarding the reliability of the sources.⁴

History-Writing in Antiquity.—To evaluate a historical document rightly, we must pay due regard to the time in which it originated. The quality of history-writing is governed by the general level of education and the cultural attainments of the age. Hence, we must not expect ancient documents like the Bible to be written in conformity with the rules of the modern critical method. The ancient historians wrote for their contemporaries. They enjoyed greater freedom than modern writers in the use of historical

⁴ Cfr. Bernheim, *Lehrbuch der hist. Methode*, 6th ed., Leipsic, 1908, pp. 479 sqq.; Ch. de Smedt, *Principes de la Critique Historique*, Liège and Paris, 1883, pp. 117 sqq.

materials, which they felt free to arrange according to rhetorical or esthetic points of view, without informing their readers of the fact. Nor were they bound as closely as present-day historians are to the chronological sequence of events.⁵

Historical Research and Philosophy.—The rules which have been laid down for ascertaining the genuineness and credibility of historical documents possess universal validity. They are not bound up with any religious creed or philosophical world-view, and consequently are accepted as reliable by all scholars. Only when there is question of miraculous events do some Rationalists balk and deny the validity of the critical method. Miracles are impossible, they contend, and therefore none can have happened. Some of these writers, like David Friedrich Strauss, bluntly deny the reality of the miraculous events reported in the Bible. "To the extent that a document reports a phenomenon or an occurrence with the express or tacit implication that it was wrought immediately by God Himself (theophanies, voices from heaven) or by human individuals in virtue of a supernatural

⁵ F. Tillmann in Esser-Mausbach, *Religion, Christentum, Kirche*, Vol. II, 5th ed., Kempten, 1923, p. 190; cfr. E. Bernheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 514 sqq.

equipment (miracles, prophecies), we need not admit it as historical.”⁶ This is an unjustifiable conclusion. If trustworthy witnesses report a miraculous occurrence, we are not free to deny it for the reason that it is opposed to our preconceived philosophical notions. To do so would be to leave the solid ground of history for that of metaphysical speculation. “For here the question at issue no longer is to ascertain the actuality of an event, which is the first and principal task of all historical inquiry. On the contrary, this point is set aside from the start, and the historian is limited to the task of demonstrating when and how such and such a report originated. The objective of historical research is thus imperceptibly altered: it is no longer to ascertain the facts, but to explain how the report of an antecedently impossible event can have originated.”⁷

Other writers of the Rationalist persuasion do not deny the historicity of miraculous phenomena when reported by trustworthy witnesses, but try to explain them in a purely natural way. They doubt the competency of the witnesses who

⁶ Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, Vol. I, 13th ed., Tübingen, 1904, p. 100.

⁷ Esser-Mausbach, *Religion, Christentum, Kirche*, 5th ed., Vol. II, p. 193.

interpreted the respective phenomena as miracles. Thus Bernheim says: "What does the testimony in all these cases signify? That certain events took place which the witnesses considered miraculous. That these events really happened, we have no reason to doubt in the case of St. Bernard and a hundred others, and no one, no matter what his religious convictions may be, can doubt it if he wishes to understand the Middle Ages. What we *may* doubt is the miraculous interpretation of these events. If we question this interpretation, and thus emancipate ourselves from the *judgment* of the witnesses on the strength of our diverging views and superior knowledge, we only do what we claim to have a methodic right to do whenever there is question of criticizing and interpreting authors. We would exceed this privilege only if we doubted the authentically recorded facts themselves."⁸ But there are authentically recorded facts (*e. g.*, the miraculous cure of Peter de Rudder, mentioned above (pp. 107 sq.) which defy every attempt at a purely natural explanation, regardless of the interpretation put upon them by eyewitnesses. In such cases, according to the Rationalists, it would be necessary to doubt the actuality of an event in spite of convincing evi-

⁸ Bernheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 328 sq.

dence in its favor.⁹ For this inconsistency we cannot blame the historical method as such, but must censure the unjustifiable reluctance of Rationalist historians to acknowledge the existence of miracles.

The dogmatic teaching of the Church on the value of Sacred Scripture is formulated by the Vatican Council as follows: "This supernatural revelation, according to the universal belief of the Church, declared by the Holy Synod of Trent, is contained 'in the written books and unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand, have come down even to us.' And these books of the Old and New Testament are to be received as sacred and canonical in their integrity, with all their parts, as they are enumerated in the decree of the said Council, and are contained in the ancient Latin edition of the Vulgate. These the Church holds to be sacred and canonical, not only because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they were afterwards approved by her au-

⁹ Cfr. L. Fonek, S.J., *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten*, 2nd ed., Innsbruck, 1916, pp. 233 sqq.; J. Donat, S.J., *Die Freiheit der Wissenschaft*, 2nd ed., Innsbruck, 1912, pp. 299-304.

thority; not only because they contain revelation with no admixture of error; but also because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author and have been delivered as such to the Church itself." ¹⁰

"If anyone shall not receive as sacred and canonical the books of Holy Scripture, entire with all their parts, as the Holy Synod of Trent has enumerated them, or shall deny that they have been divinely inspired; let him be anathema." ¹¹

§ II. GENUINENESS AND CREDIBILITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. If the demonstration of the divine origin of Christian revelation on the basis of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament is to have an independent standing, the authenticity and credibility of the writings contained in that

¹⁰ *Conc. Vat.*, Sess. III, c. 2, *de Revel.* (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1787).

¹¹ *Conc. Vat.*, Sess. III, can. 4, *de Rev.* (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1809). Cfr. *Decretum "Lamentabili,"* prop. 9-19 (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 2009-2019); and the Response of the Biblical Commission of June 30, 1909 (quoted in M. Seisenberger, *Practical Handbook for the Study of the Bible*, new ed., New York, 1925, pp. 485 sq.) and of June 26, 1912 (*ibid.*, pp. 490 sqq.)

portion of the Bible must be established without regard to the New Testament. Hence we cannot in this connection appeal to the utterances of Jesus Christ to prove the genuineness or credibility of the Old Testament.

2. It is unnecessary for our present purpose to deal separately with each book of the Old Testament. It will suffice to enumerate the principal arguments for the genuineness and credibility of those books which we intend to use as sources of proofs later on. The rest belongs to the special theological disciplines of Biblical Introduction and Exegesis.¹²

I. Genuineness of the Old Testament

We assert that the writings contained in the Old Testament are genuine. The proof for this thesis is based partly on extrinsic testimonies and partly on intrinsic criteria.

1. *Extrinsic Testimonies.*—a) The genuineness of all the writings contained in the Old Testament is guaranteed by the constant tradition of the Jews. This tradition goes back to the earliest

¹² Cfr. M. Seisenberger, *Practical Handbook for the Study of the Bible*, new revised ed., New York, 1925; H. Pope, O.P., *Catholic Student's "Aids" to the Bible*, The Old Testament, new ed., 3 vols., *The New Testament*, 2 vols., London, 1926 sqq.; Brüll-Messmer, *Outlines of Bible Knowledge*, 2nd ed., Freiburg i. B., 1927. See also the resp. articles in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*.

times and is all the more trustworthy because in many passages of these writings the Jews or their rulers appear in a highly unfavorable light. Forgeries of this sort would not have been tolerated. The most ancient non-Biblical witness for the genuineness of at least the proto-canonical writings of the Old Testament is Flavius Josephus.¹³

b) The later books of the Old Testament are not all, it is true, attested by extra-biblical witnesses, but they contain many references to the former, references which show that especially the *Pentateuch* was known to and accepted by the Jewish people.¹⁴

2. *Intrinsic Criteria*.—The contents of nearly all the books of the Old Testament allow us to identify their authors and to fix the time of their composition with considerable assurance. Thus the *Pentateuch* in several places mentions that Moses made a record of certain events or laws.¹⁵ In these texts there is question only of particular

¹³ *Contra Ap.*, I, 8, 38; *Ant. Jud.*, Proem., III; XII, 2. 1. For a brief sketch of the life of Josephus see J. P. Arendzen, *Men and Manners in the Days of Christ*, London, 1928, pp. 271-287; for his testimony on Christ, *infra*, pp. 258 sqq. Cfr. B. Poertner, *Die Autorität der deuterokanonischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, Münster i. W., 1893, pp. 27 sq.

¹⁴ Cfr. 1 Kings XXI, 2 sqq.; 3 Kings II, 3; 4 Kings XIV, 6.

¹⁵ Ex. XVII, 14; XXIV, 4, 7; Num. XXXIII, 2; Deut. XXXI, 9, 22; XXVIII, 58.

passages; but the strict unity which informs all parts of the Pentateuch permits us to conclude that the remaining sections also were written by Moses.¹⁶

The *geographical views* expressed in the Pentateuch show that this portion of the Old Testament was composed before the Israelites took possession of the Promised Land. Thus Egypt is mentioned as a country well known to them.¹⁷ Certain localities in Chanaan are described as resembling places in Egypt,¹⁸ but Chanaan itself is still an unknown country.¹⁹

The Book of *Josue*, though perhaps not altogether the work of the author whose name it bears, originated soon after the Israelites had entered Chanaan and while they were still engaged in subjugating its inhabitants. This is evident from the description of existing conditions. Rahab, the harlot, who had shielded the spies of Josue, was still alive when this book was written.²⁰

The author of the Book of *Judges* (presuma-

¹⁶ H. Pope, O.P., *Catholic Student's "Aids" to the Study of the Bible*, Vol. II, London, 1928.

¹⁷ Gen. XLVI, 28; XLI, 45; Ex. I, 11; XIII, 20; XIV, 2.

¹⁸ Gen. XIII, 10; Num. XIII, 23.

¹⁹ Gen. XXIII, 2, 19; XXXIII, 18; Deut. XI, 10.

²⁰ Jos. VI, 25.

bly Samuel) made use of existing records.²¹ The compilation of these records must have taken place soon after the accession of Saul, for we are repeatedly assured that "in those days there was no king in Israel, but every one did that which seemed right to himself."²² This remark points to a time when the royal office was still new and its blessings were vividly felt by the people.

The *first and second Books of Kings* were written while the country was divided into two monarchies,²³ evidently some time after the death of Samuel.²⁴ The name of the author, who was probably not an eye-witness of all the events which he records, is unknown.

The *third and fourth Books of Kings* repeatedly refer to older sources of information.²⁵ These two books were manifestly written during the first half of the Babylonian Captivity, since the fourth in its last verses mentions the thirty-

²¹ Judg. V.

²² Judg. XVII, 6; XVIII, 1, 31; XXI, 24; cfr. J. F. Smith, *Studies in Hebrew History*, London, 1928, pp. 28 sqq.

²³ 1 Kings XXVII, 6. It is significant that these two books should also be called, as by an alternative title, Books of Samuel. Cfr. J. F. Smith, *Studies in Hebrew History*, p. 37.

²⁴ 1 Kings IX, 9; cfr. 1 Par. IX, 22; XXVI, 28; XXIX, 29; cfr. J. F. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 37 sqq.

²⁵ 3 Kings XI, 41; XIV, 29; 4 Kings I, 18.

seventh year of the imprisonment of Jechonias, but not the end of the Captivity.²⁶

The two books of *Paralipomena* date from the period after the Exile²⁷ and, to judge by their contents, were written by Esdras.

The two books which bear the name of *Esdras* are compiled from a number of separate documents, which were incorporated with the text; they also originated after the Babylonian Exile and were probably amalgamated into one whole by the author under whose name they have been handed down to us.

The two books of the *Machabees*, which narrate the history of the Chosen People under the command of Judas Machabeus and his brethren, were composed before the end of the second century B. C.²⁸ Their authors are not known, but their authenticity is unquestioned.

The *Psalms*, called in Hebrew *Tehillim* (that is, "Hymns of Praise"), were composed by several authors, as their titles and contents indicate. A large number of them are the work of King David. Some were composed by Asaph. The final hymns were probably added to the collection at the time of the Babylonian Cap-

²⁶ 4 Kings XXV, 27 sqq.

²⁷ 1 Par. III, 19-24.

²⁸ 1 Mach. XVI, 23 sq.; 2 Mach. I, 10.

tivity. The Psalter was completed under Nehemias and Esdras.²⁹

The Book of *Isaias* embodies a vision of a prophet who lived under Ezechias, King of Juda.³⁰ Its author, Isaias, the son of Amos, is also mentioned in the fourth Book of Kings,³¹ where there is question, as in the book of Isaias itself, of the intimate relations between the Prophet and King Ezechias. Chapters XIX and XX of the Fourth Book of Kings are manifestly taken from Is. XXXVII–XXXIX. Hence there can be no reasonable doubt that Isaias lived at the time of Ezechias. He himself claims the authorship of the prophecy that goes under his name, and we have no reason to challenge his claim.³²

The Prophecy of *Jeremias* is the work of a

²⁹ 2 Mach. II, 13; cfr. Flavius Josephus, *C. Ap.*, I, 8.

³⁰ Is. I, 1.

³¹ 4 Kings XII, 2 sqq.

³² Is. I, 1. We know nothing about Isaias except what he himself tells us. The first incident which he records is his vision in the Temple and the commission entrusted to him by Yahweh. But we can gauge his character from his writings, and there is extant a rabbinical tradition to the effect that he was of royal blood, which is quite in harmony with his career. Indeed his evident influence at court gives weight to the supposition that he was a nephew of King Amasias and hence a kinsman of the succeeding monarchs in whose reigns he lived. For a short but graphic sketch of Isaias and his times see J. F. Smith, *Studies in Hebrew History*, London, 1928, pp. 69–87.

prophet who exercised his office under King Josias.³³ Jeremias was repeatedly commanded to write down the words that God had spoken to him concerning Israel and Juda.³⁴ He dictated them to his friend Baruch, son of Nerias, who probably welded the different parts of the book together.³⁵ The collection, which pertains mainly to the Exile, was undoubtedly completed before the end of that period, since if it had not yet been closed, the termination of the Exile would undoubtedly have been mentioned in XXV, 11, and XXIX, 10.

The Prophet Daniel acknowledges himself as the writer of the book of *Daniel*, and both form and contents indicate that the prophecy was composed at the court of Babylon.³⁶

The author of the prophecy of *Micheas*, according to his own testimony,³⁷ was a Morasthite, who lived in the days of Ezechias, king of Juda. This statement is confirmed in Jer. XXVI, 18, where Mich. III, 12 is assigned to

³³ Jer. I, 2.

³⁴ Jer. XXXVI, 2; XXVIII.

³⁵ Bar. XXXVI, 4, 18, 32. On the life and time of Jeremias see J. F. Smith, *Studies In Hebrew History*, pp. 88-98.

³⁶ Dan. VII, 1 sq.; VIII, 1, 26; XII, 4. On Daniel and his times see Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-126; Joh. Goettsberger, *Das Buch Daniel*, Bonn, 1928, pp. 1 sqq.

³⁷ Mich. I, 1; III, 1.

the reign of Ezechias. The prophecy of Micheas must have been written before the destruction of Samaria and the fall of the northern kingdom, for both events are represented as future.

The Prophecy of *Aggeus*, as can be gathered from its contents, was written soon after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Exile, and the authorship is confirmed by 1 Esd. V, 1, and VI, 14.

The Prophecy of *Zacharias* belongs to the same period, since the author began his prophetic career two months after Aggeus.³⁸ The First Book of Esdras mentions both these prophets.³⁹

The Prophecy of *Malachias* was written somewhat later, after the completion of the Temple.⁴⁰ But it is probable that this prophet was still living under Nehemias and Esdras, since he combats the same abuses against which Nehemias raised his voice.⁴¹

³⁸ Zach. I, 1, 7; VII, 1.

³⁹ 1 Esdr., l. c.

⁴⁰ Mal. I, 10; III, 1, 10.

⁴¹ 2 Esdr. XIII, 4, 5; 10-13, 23-30. On the prophetic books of the Old Testament cfr. F. Kaulen, *Einleitung in die hl. Schrift*, Vol. II, 5th ed., Freiburg, 1913, pp. 197-299; R. Cornely, S.J., *Compendium Introductionis in S. Scripturas*, 8th ed., Paris, 1927; Brüll-Messmer, *Outlines of Bible Knowledge*, 2nd ed., Freiburg i. B., 1927, pp. 99-116; M. Seisenberger, *Practical Handbook for the Study of the Bible*, revised ed., N. Y., 1925, pp. 304-333.

2. Credibility of the Old Testament

We maintain that the writings of the Old Testament are credible, i. e., deserving of trust.

1. *The authors of these writings were in a position to know and to tell the truth.* Many of the events which they record were known to them from personal experience. That they did not lack keenness of observation nor the requisite knowledge of contemporary affairs, is evident from the nature of the events recorded as well as from the manner in which they are described. These events were external occurrences, for the observation and recording of which normal powers of perception and common sense were quite sufficient. That the authors were endowed with these necessary qualifications is proved by the manner in which they deal with the various subjects that form the bulk of their writings.

In some cases, it is true, extraneous sources in the form of oral traditions and written records had to be laid under contribution. But these also were used critically and were no doubt quite reliable. Thus the oral tradition that is to be presupposed for at least a portion of the Book of Genesis, may be regarded as absolutely dependable, especially where it deals with impor-

tant events and beliefs current among the people. To this must be added the well-known fidelity and tenacity of the Oriental memory and the fact that Moses most probably employed written records in compiling his book. The stories which were told in later Babylonian times about the heroes of the period of Hammurapi are evidently derived from ancient documents.⁴²

The other written sources of the Old Testament seem to have perished, and we are consequently not in a position to investigate their reliability. But the fact that the books which contained quotations from them found a favorable reception and general recognition at a time when the sources themselves were still in existence and the memory of the events in question was fresh among the people, is sure proof that the sources used by the sacred writers were reliable and can be fully trusted.

2. *The Old Testament writers were willing to tell the truth.* Those who are known to us are without exception men of good moral character, deep religious convictions, and nobly unselfish in their efforts to promote the glory of God and the welfare of the Chosen People. Such

⁴² A. Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, tr. by C. L. Beaumont and C. H. W. Jones, Vol. II, London and New York, 1911.

witnesses can reasonably be expected to tell the truth.

Their statements are, moreover, frequently confirmed by extra-Biblical sources. The nations enumerated in the tenth chapter of Genesis, for instance, have nearly all been traced in Assyrian inscriptions.⁴³ King Amraph-el of Sennaar⁴⁴ is identical with Hammurapi, King of Babylon. His ally, Arioch, King of Pontus, is identified by some scholars with Eriaku⁴⁵ of the cuneiform inscriptions.⁴⁶ Ur of the Chaldees,⁴⁷ the home of Abraham, is the Uru of the inscriptions.⁴⁸ It has lately been excavated. King Hammurapi mentions it in the introduction to his code:⁴⁹ "The royal scion [Ham], whom Sin created, who made rich the city of Ur, the humble petitioner who brings superfluity to Ekissirgal [the temple of the Moon God Ur.]"⁵⁰ The Hebrews⁵¹ occur as "Habiri" in the Tel-el-Amarna

⁴³ A. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 275 sqq.

⁴⁴ Gen. XIV, 1; cfr. H. Pope, O.P., *The Catholic Student's "Aids" to the Bible*, Vol. I, London, 1913, p. 33.

⁴⁵ A. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 321.

⁴⁶ H. Winckler, *Keilschriftliches Textbuch zum Alten Testament*, 3rd ed., Leipsic, 1909, Introduction, p. ix.

⁴⁷ Gen. XI, 31.

⁴⁸ A. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 6 sq.

⁴⁹ Code of Hammurapi, col. II, 13 sqq.

⁵⁰ H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament*, Vol. I, Tübingen, 1909, p. 141.

⁵¹ Gen. XIV, 13.

tablets, which date from the middle of the fifteenth century B. C.⁵² The famous "Israel Stele" of the Pharaoh Merneptah (about 1250 B. C.), discovered in 1894, contains the name Israel,⁵³ applying it to a portion of the people of Chanaan who had been defeated by Merneptah. The inscription of the Mesha (Mesa) Stone (ninth century B. C.) furnishes a parallel to 4 Kings I, 1 and III, 3 sqq.⁵⁴ Omri, the father of Achab, and his subjugation of the Moabites⁵⁵ and the military expedition of Joram against Moab are mentioned there. An inscription on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser (Salmanassar) II (ninth century B. C.) tells of an Assyrian expedition against Hazaël, king of Damascus,⁵⁶ and of

⁵² Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 339. These clay tablets, found in 1887 in the ruins of Chut-Aten (now Tel-el-Amarna), are political documents from the reigns of Pharaoh Amenophis III and especially Amenophis IV, therefore about 1450 B. C. There are some 300 fragments, preserved in the Berlin Museum, in the Museum of Gizeh (Cairo), and in the British Museum; some are private property. Cfr. Gressmann, *op. cit.*, p. 131, 4 a; H. Pope, O.P., *The Catholic Student's "Aids" to the Study of the Bible*, Vol. I, London, 1913, pp. 34 sq.

⁵³ Gressmann, *op. cit.*, p. 195; Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 20 sq.; Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 332 sq.

⁵⁴ Gressmann, *op. cit.*, p. 172; Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 238, gives a picture of this stone and a translation of the inscription, and says: "The statements of Mesha agree entirely with the Bible" (*ibid.*, p. 239).

⁵⁵ Cfr. 3 Kings XVI, 28.

⁵⁶ Cfr. 4 Kings VIII, 8 sqq.

a tribute paid by the Tyrians, the Sidonians, and Yahua, the son of Khumri.⁵⁷ The annals of Tiglath-Pileser III (733 B. C.) confirm 4 Kings XV, 29 sq.⁵⁸ The annals of Sargon⁵⁹ (721-705 B. C.) record the conquest of Samaria, whence he deported 27,290 people.⁶⁰ Sennacherib's expe-

⁵⁷ Cfr. 4 Kings IX, 2 sqq. Pope notes (*op. cit.*, 131) that while these monuments do not confirm the Biblical history, which makes no mention of any such campaign, they show how slight a knowledge of the history of Israel we can acquire from the Bible alone, which was not given us as a history of Israel, but of God's dealings with the Chosen People—all else is secondary. We are enabled to date the eighteenth year of Shalmaneser II referred to on the Black Obelisk (which is in the British Museum) from the Assyrian *Eponym Canon* (cfr. Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 137 sq.), which shows that it was B. C. 842.

⁵⁸ Here the respective portion of the text: "Bit-Humria [the house of Omri, *i. e.*, the family of the King of Israel], the whole of his people with their possessions I conducted to Assyria. As they had dethroned Pakaha [Phacee], their king, I set up Ausi [Osee] to rule over them. I received ten talents of gold and ten talents of silver as tribute from them." Tiglath-Pileser (Theglathpalasar) is called *Phul* (Pul) in 4 Kings XVI, 26 and 1 Par. V, 26. The same name (Pulu) occurs in the Babylonian list of kings, and it was probably the official title of Tiglath-Pileser in Babylon, as distinguished from Assyria (Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 132). The Greek form of the name is Poros. He died in 727. Cfr. Schuster-Holzammer, *Handbuch zur biblischen Geschichte*, Vol. I, 8th ed. by Jos. Selbst, Freiburg i. B., 1925, p. 640, n. 8; Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament*, Vol. I, p. 115; A. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 214.

⁵⁹ Cfr. Is. XX, 1 (722 B. C.); Gressmann, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁶⁰ 4 Kings XVII, 6; cfr. Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 132; Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 218 sq.

dition to Jerusalem (701 B.C.) under King Ezechias⁶¹ is mentioned in an inscription discovered in the ruins of Nineveh.⁶² Another inscription, dating from about the same period, describes the scene at Lachis⁶³ as follows: "Sanherib [Sennacherib], king of the world, king of Assyria, seated himself upon his throne, and the prisoners from Lachish marched before

⁶¹ 4 Kings XVIII, 13 sqq. He says that he brought out Padi, the king of Accaron, from Jerusalem, that he besieged that city, and shut up Ezechias in it "like a bird in a cage," that he captured forty-six cities belonging to him, and that he made him send after him to Ninive "thirty talents of gold and eight talents of silver." The Bible (4 Kgs. XVIII, 11) has: "three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold." Pope (*op. cit.*, p. 133) notes that "while this account corroborates the Biblical narrative in many particulars, it yet diverges from it in others; this is not the place to attempt a reconciliation of the discrepancies; suffice it to say that Sennacherib may possibly have made two separate invasions of Palestine, and that, owing to the unfavorable issue of one of them, the Assyrian annalist may have combined the accounts of both into one narrative. It is possible that we have a hint of this in the Bible, for in 4 Kgs. XVIII, 16, there seems to be a gap, as though the subsequent narrative were concerned with a later invasion." Dr. A. Jeremias thinks Sennacherib waged three campaigns against Jerusalem (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 222 sqq.)

⁶² Cfr. Gressmann, *op. cit.*, I, 119 sq.

⁶³ 4 Kings XVIII, 14: "Then Ezechias, king of Juda, sent messengers to the king of the Assyrians to Lachis, saying: I have offended, depart from me: and all that thou shalt put upon me, I will bear. And the king of the Assyrians put a tax upon Ezechias, king of Juda, of three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold."

him.”⁶⁴ The “Babylonian Chronicle,” in agreement with the Biblical⁶⁵ account, describes Sennacherib’s death as follows: “On the twentieth day of Tebet [681 B. C.] Sinahheriba, king of Assyria, was killed by his son in revolt.”⁶⁶ And of his successor, Esarhaddon,⁶⁷ the Chronicle says: “On the 28th of Adar, Asurahiddina, his son, ascended the throne.”⁶⁸ Isaias XLV, 1 is confirmed by this inscription: “Marduk looked around and sought for a just king, and chose a man according to his own heart, calling Kurash [Cyrus] to be king over the whole world.”⁶⁹ Of Nabuchodonosor (B. C. 605–562), who destroyed Jerusalem,⁷⁰ an ancient cuneiform inscription found in a cave says that he went on a

⁶⁴ Cfr. Gressmann, *op. cit.*, I, p. 121; Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 225.

⁶⁵ 4 Kings XIX, 37.

⁶⁶ Cfr. Gressmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 126; Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 133; Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 227.

⁶⁷ Cfr. 4 Kings XIX, 37.

⁶⁸ Gressmann, *l. c.* Esarhaddon was reputed to be the mildest of all Assyrian kings, yet the Bible says of him (2 Paral. XXXIII, 11) that he had Manasses taken “bound with chains [Hebrew: with hooks] and fetters to Babylon.” At Zenjirli, near Aleppo, there was discovered a figure in relief representing Esarhaddon, before whom are kneeling Tirhaka, king of Egypt, and another, who is probably the king of Samala, both with hooks in their noses, and the Assyrian king is holding them by a leash. Cfr. Is. XIX, 4 and 4 Kgs. XIX, 28. (Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 133 sq.)

⁶⁹ Cfr. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 232.

⁷⁰ Cfr. 4 Kings XXIV, 1, 10 sqq.

military expedition against Ammananu (Anti-Lebanon).⁷¹

For the time antedating the rule of Cyrus the Great we have up to now no confirmation in the cuneiform texts. But even if detailed records of that time had come down to us, we could hardly expect to find in them a report concerning the dismissal of the Jews from captivity.⁷²

A further confirmation of the Old Testament is to be found in the stories of the creation and the flood which were spread in a more or less distorted form over the whole earth.⁷³ The striking resemblances between these traditions, especially regarding the Deluge, render it probable that they had a common source, which is most accurately quoted in the Biblical and Babylonian versions.⁷⁴ The account given in Genesis, which is free from mythological admixtures, is evidently not based upon the Baby-

⁷¹ Gressmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 126 sq.; Winckler, *Die Keilschriften und das Alte Testament*, 3rd ed., 1903, pp. 107 sqq.; Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 230.

⁷² Cfr. H. Winckler, *Keilschriftliches Textbuch zum Alten Testament*, XX; Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 330, 336, 339.

⁷³ The most important of these are listed by A. Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, tr. by Beaumont and Johns, Vol. I, London and New York, 1911, pp. 142 sqq., 245 sqq.; cfr. Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-198.

⁷⁴ Cfr. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament*, Vol. I, pp. 1-31, 39-61.

lonian version, but upon some other oral or written source, from which not only the Babylonians, but all nations originally derived their information concerning that catastrophic event.

A final proof for the credibility of the Old Testament is its detailed agreement with the conditions of ancient Oriental civilization.⁷⁵ The judicial customs of the time of Abraham, as illustrated by the relation of Sara to Hagar,⁷⁶ and that of Rachel to Balaam,⁷⁷ correspond exactly with the laws of Hammurapi.⁷⁸ The Tel-el-Amarna letters permit us to recognize the social background of the story of Joseph of Egypt (d. about 1635 B. C.).⁷⁹ Grain and other victuals are stored at Yarimuta, and Yanhamu, whom the king has appointed as his minister, sells food to buyers from Chanaan, for which he is paid with silver and wood, and youths and maidens too.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Cfr. A. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1 sqq.

⁷⁶ Gen. XVI, 1 sqq.

⁷⁷ Gen. XXX, 1 sqq.

⁷⁸ Cfr. Gressmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 156 sq. (144-146); Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 355 sqq.

⁷⁹ Gen. XXXIX sqq.

⁸⁰ Cfr. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 70 sqq. Georg Ebers says in *Ägypten und die Bücher Moses* (1868): "The whole story of Joseph must be designated as corresponding throughout to the true circumstances of ancient Egypt." (Quoted by Jeremias, *op. cit.*, II, 68.)

Besides these extra-Biblical sources, parallel reports contained in the revealed books themselves may be employed for testing their credibility, provided, of course, they are of independent provenience.⁸¹

§ III. GENUINENESS AND CREDIBILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Christ Himself left no writing. He taught by word of mouth and commissioned His Apostles to follow His example.⁸² But it was not long before the need of written documents made itself felt among the faithful. The solicitude of the Apostles to preserve the deposit of faith in its pristine purity and the wish of the various churches to possess the Apostolic preaching in a permanent form, necessarily led to written statements of the more important doctrines of the Christian religion. The selection and arrangement of the materials were governed by the conditions existing in the different congregations at that time. This is the reason why not only the letters of the Apostles (Epistles), but also the Gospels, show each a separate and dis-

⁸¹ Compare, *e. g.*, Ps. XVII and 2 Kings XXII; Ps. L and 2 Kings XII; Ps. LXII and 1 Kings XXII, 5.

⁸² Luke IX, 2.

ting tendency. Each was written for a specific purpose and manifests this purpose more or less plainly throughout. All the writings of the New Testament were composed for particular occasions and consequently we cannot expect to find in them a systematic account of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Evangelists themselves call attention to the relative incompleteness of their respective productions.⁸³

From the New Testament, as from the Old, we shall select only those writings which we intend to use as sources of demonstration. The most important of these are the four Gospels.

The word Gospel (*εὐαγγέλιον*) originally denoted, not a written book, but "good tidings," namely, the glad news of the Messianic Kingdom brought by Christ and His Apostles.⁸⁴ After these events had been recorded in writing, the books containing them were also called "good tidings" or Gospels. The term first oc-

⁸³ John XVI, 12; XX, 30 sq.; XXI, 25. Cfr. J. E. Belser, *History of the Passion*, tr. by F. A. Marks, ed. by A. Preuss, St. Louis, 1929, Introduction and *passim*.

⁸⁴ Matt. IV, 23; Acts XX, 24; Rom. I, 1, 9, 16. The word "Gospel" (*εὐαγγέλιον*) occurs sixty times in St. Paul; on its meaning in his Epistles and in the other New Testament writings, see F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul* (tr. by J. L. Stoddard), Vol. II, London, 1927, pp. 396-400.

curs in this sense in the writings of St. Justin Martyr.⁸⁵

We shall now examine the authenticity and credibility of the four Gospels and of such other books of the New Testament as are of importance for our argument.

I. Genuineness of the New Testament

1. The Gospel of St. Matthew

The Gospel of St. Matthew is a genuine historical document. This can be proved.

a) *From External Testimonies.*—a) The most ancient and most valuable attestation of the authorship of the first Gospel is that of Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia (about 130 A.D.) He was a pupil of St. John the Evangelist, a friend of St. Polycarp, and the teacher of St. Irenaeus.⁸⁶ Eusebius quotes him as saying: "Matthew collected the sayings (τὰ λόγια) in the Hebrew language, and each interpreted them as best he could."⁸⁷ The emphasis, as the construction of the sentence shows, is not on the contents,

⁸⁵ *Apol.*, I, 66 (Migne, P. G., VI, 429); *Dial. c. Tryph.*, 10, 100 (*ibid.*, VI, 496, 709).

⁸⁶ *Adv. Haer.*, V, 33, 4 (P. G., VII, 1214).

⁸⁷ *H. E.*, III, 39: Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνετάξατο, ἡρμῆνευσεν δ' αὐτὰ ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος.

but on the language of the *logia*. Papias assumes his readers to be familiar with the Gospel of St. Matthew and wishes to inform them that this Gospel was originally composed in Hebrew. In conformity with the title of his treatise, ΤΑ ΛΟΓΙΑ, he discusses mainly the discourses of Christ. This appears also from the explanation which he adds to the words of John concerning Mark. Although John had spoken of "the words or deeds of the Lord," Papias simply employs the term "words of the Lord." Finally, if there had existed, under the title *Logia*, a separate treatise by St. Matthew differing from his Gospel as it has come down to us, it would be difficult to explain how that treatise could have disappeared so completely that no ecclesiastical writer of the early centuries ever mentions it or quotes from it.

β) *Date of Composition*—According to St. Irenaeus,⁸⁸ "Matthew also issued a written gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome

⁸⁸ *Adv. Haer.*, III, 1, 1 (P.G., VII, 344). We quote the translation of A. Roberts and W. H. Rambaut in the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Writings of St. Irenaeus, Vol. I, pp. 258 sq., Edinburgh, 1868. The Greek text of the passage, as preserved for us by Eusebius, is: ὁ μὲν δὴ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν καὶ Τραφῆν ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγέλιον, τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν μετὰ δὲ

and laying the foundations of the Church." This

τὴν τούτων ἔξοδον Μάρκος, ὁ μαθητὴς καὶ ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρον, καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ ὑπὸ Πέτρον κηρυσσόμενα ἐγγράφως ἡμῖν παραδέδωκεν· καὶ Λουκᾶς δέ, ὁ ἀκόλουθος Παύλου, τὸ ὑπ, ἐκείνου κηρυσσόμενον εὐαγγέλιον ἐν βίβλῳ κατέθετο. Ἐπειτα Ἰωάννης, ὁ μαθητὴς τοῦ Κυρίου, ὁ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ ἀναπεσών, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξέδωκεν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν Εφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας διατρίβων. The first sentence, with which we are here concerned, is literally translated by Pope (*The Catholic Student's "Aids" to the Study of the Bible*, Vol. II, London, 1918, pp. 175 sq.) as follows: "Matthew indeed among the Hebrews and in their own tongue; and he brought out [with him] the writing of the Gospel when Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome and founding the Church." The redundant "and" is passed over in the Latin and English translations of Irenaeus and Eusebius (see the one quoted above from the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*). Pope (*l.c.*, p. 176) thinks that a clause has been omitted and that the verb of the first clause of the sentence has vanished. "That this is not an impossible supposition," he says, "will be clear to anyone who reads carefully the chapter of Eusebius' History whence this extract is taken, *H.E.*, V, viii; in section 5 in particular we have a very mutilated sentence. We feel justified, then, in inserting some such verb as 'wrote,' and thus reading: 'Matthew indeed wrote among the Hebrews, and in their own tongue.' On the difficulty arising from the word ἐξήνεγκεν, which is translated in the text above by "issued" and by Pope (*supra*) by "brought out [with him]," the last-mentioned writer says (*ibid.*): "According to the above interpretation a verb has to be supplied for the first clause, *viz.*, 'wrote.' But if we are justified in this conjecture, then it is practically impossible to translate ἐξήνεγκεν by 'published,' as is generally done. The key to the whole passage lies in Irenaeus' desire to explain how the Apostles were individually furnished with the Gospel when they separated and 'went forth to the ends of the earth.' We do not know what Greek word Irenaeus used to express this 'going forth'; the Latin has *exierunt*. But it is to this *exierunt* that Irenaeus seems to refer when he says: 'But after their departure, ἔξοδον, *excessum*.' Thus he would be referring here not to the 'departure,' *i. e.*, death, of Peter and Paul, but to the 'going out' of the *Apostles*. If this interpretation is justified, every-

would fix the date of the composition of the First Gospel between 61 and 66 A.D. Eusebius⁸⁹ says the First Gospel was written in the

thing will fall into line. For Irenaeus will simply be saying that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Palestine, that he brought it with him when Peter and Paul were at Rome, and that after the separation of the Apostles Mark wrote what Peter was actually preaching." John Chapman, O. S. B. (*Journal of Theological Studies*, 1905, pp. 563 sqq.) has given the following interpretative translation of St. Irenaeus' famous passage, which has been accepted by Harnack (*Dates of Acts and the Synoptic Gospels*, 1911, p. 130):

"Matthew among the Hebrews in their own language published a writing also of the Gospel [*besides preaching it*].

"Peter and Paul preaching the Gospel [*not to Jews but*] at Rome [*without writing it down*], and founding the church there [*whose testimony I shall give presently, viz. III, iii.*]

"But [*although they died without having written a Gospel*] after their death [*their preaching has not been lost to us, for*] Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, has handed down to us, he also in writing [*like Matthew*], the things which were preached by Peter.

"And Luke besides, the companion of [*the other*] Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by the Apostle.

"Finally, John, the disciple of the Lord, he also published a Gospel while he was living in Ephesus of Asia."

Here is part of Chapman's comment on the passage: "He [Irenaeus] is simply explaining that the teaching of four of the principal Apostles has not been lost, but has been handed down to us in writing. . . . This is the development of the first part of the thesis: the Apostles after the resurrection were filled with knowledge of the Gospel, and they went forth and preached the same Gospel in all lands. . . . The second part of the thesis answers the question, 'How has this preaching come down to us in writing?' The reply is that two of the Apostles wrote down their own teaching, while two others were reported by a follower."

⁸⁹ H. E., III, 24, 6: Ματθαῖος τε γὰρ πρότερον Ἑβραίοις κηρύξας, ὥς ἡμελλεν καὶ ἐφ' ἐτέροις λέναι, πατρίῳ γλῶττι γραφῇ παραδοὺς τὸ κατ' αὐτὸν εὐαγγέλιον.

year in which the Apostles separated (A. D. 42; cfr. Acts XII, 17). "Matthew," he writes, "had first preached to Hebrews, and when he was on the point of going to others, he transmitted in writing in his native language the Gospel according to himself." There is a discrepancy between these statements of about twenty years. Unless we prefer to assume that the statement of St. Irenaeus concerning the united ministry of SS. Peter and Paul in Rome is a later interpolation, all that we can conclude from the two passages just quoted is that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel before the year 70. Origen positively asserts that, according to tradition, St. Matthew was the first who wrote a gospel.⁹⁰

b) *Intrinsic Evidence*.—a) Neither the identity of the author nor the language in which he wrote can be recognized with certainty from the First Gospel as we now have it. But, on the other hand, there is nothing in it that contradicts the testimonies of the ancient ecclesiastical writers whom we have just quoted. On the contrary, there are indications (as, for example, the way in which the Gospel speaks of the

⁹⁰ Quoted by Eusebius, *H. E.*, VI, 14, 5: "Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned from tradition that the first was written by Matthew."

Apostle Matthew ⁹¹) which seem positively to point to him as the author.

β) That St. Matthew wrote his Gospel before the year 70 is evidenced, first, by the fact that he mentions the destruction of Jerusalem as a prophecy, but not as an accomplished fact, and, second, that he fails to indicate clearly the distinction between that dramatic event and the end of the world.⁹²

In dating the Gospel of St. Matthew from the beginning of the second century, Rationalist exegetes are impelled by subjective religious rather than by objective historical motives. The story told in this document, they argue, is frankly Catholic, and, therefore, cannot possibly have originated in the first Christian century. "Though what is ascribed here (Matth. XVI, 18 sq.) to St. Peter cannot be claimed in favor of the Roman successor of that Apostle," says O. Pfleiderer, "it is undeniable that those words embody the fundamental view upon which the Catholic ecclesiastical system has been consistently erected. All the more certain it is, therefore, for everyone who can judge events in their true historical light, that the words in question [Mt. XVI, 17 sqq.], far from resting

⁹¹ Matt. X, 3.

⁹² Matt. XXIV, 29.

upon an ancient tradition, or coming from the mouth of Jesus, are rather the Evangelist's own expression of his ecclesiastical consciousness, and consequently the most important testimony to the character and origin of this Gospel. . . . The idea that the Church is built upon Peter as its foundation is simply unthinkable in the first century."⁹³

2. The Gospel of St. Mark

In the same manner we can prove that the Gospel of St. Mark is authentic.

a) *From External Testimonies.*—a) Here again Papias is our oldest witness. He reports what he heard from a certain "Presbyter John" as follows: "This also the Presbyter [John] used to say: Mark, having been Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered, though he did not [record] in order (τάξει) the things said or done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed Him; but later on, as I said, [attached himself to] Peter, who used to frame his teaching so as to meet the wants of his hearers, but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses.

⁹³ *Das Urchristentum*, Vol. I, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1902, p. 584. This objection will be considered in Vol. III of this *Handbook*, where we deal with the Primacy of Peter.

Thus Mark committed no error, for he wrote down some particulars just as he called them to mind; he took heed to one point only—to omit nothing of what he had heard, and to state nothing falsely, in [his narrative of] them.”⁹⁴ With this testimony of the Bishop of Hierapolis, writing in the early part of the second century, the tradition of Christian antiquity agrees in every essential detail, except that the relation of St. Mark’s Gospel to St. Peter is more fully explained by later writers.

β) *Date of Composition*.—According to Clement of Alexandria, St. Mark wrote his Gospel at the request of many who had heard St. Peter preach in Rome. “When Peter learned of this, he neither directly forbade it, nor encouraged it.”⁹⁵ This passage would seem to indicate that the Second Gospel was composed during St. Peter’s first visit to Rome,

⁹⁴ Eusebius, *H. E.*, III, 39, 15: καὶ τοῦ ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἔλεγεν· Μάρκος μὲν ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου γενόμενος, ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν, ἀκριβῶς ἔγραψεν, οὐ μέντοι τάξει, τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα· οὔτε γὰρ ἤκουσεν τοῦ κυρίου οὔτε παρηκολούθησεν αὐτῷ, ὕστερον δέ, ὡς ἔφην, Πέτρῳ ὅς πρὸς τὰς χρείας ἐποιεῖτο τὰς διδασκαλίας, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὥσπερ σύνταξιν τῶν κυριακῶν ποιούμενος λογίων, ὥστε οὐδὲν ἡμαρτεν Μάρκος οὕτως ἔνια γράψας ὡς ἀπεμνημόνευσεν. ἐνὸς γὰρ ἐποιήσατο πρόνοιαν, τοῦ μηδὲν ὧν ἤκουσεν παραλιπεῖν ἢ ψεύσασθαι τι ἐν αὐτοῖς. (*P. G.*, XX, 300). Cfr. H. Pope, O.P., *The Catholic Student’s “Aids” to the Bible*, Vol. II, p. 200.

⁹⁵ Eusebius, *loco. cit.*, *P. G.*, XX, 552; H. Pope, O. P., *ibid.*, p. 199.

about A. D. 42-44, though this assumption cannot be squared with the statement of St. Irenaeus that "after their departure [he is speaking of SS. Peter and Paul] Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, he, too, having written what was preached by Peter, delivered it to us."⁹⁶ It is possible, however, that St. Mark began the work of compiling his Gospel during the lifetime of St. Peter, but did not complete it until after his death. If this be the case, the Second Gospel was probably written about the year 67. Against this is the testimony of the subscription to later uncial and cursive MSS. of the Greek New Testament, which asserts that the Gospel was written ten or twelve years after the Ascension of Christ.⁹⁷

b) *Intrinsic Proof of the Authenticity of the Gospel of St. Mark.*— a) *The Author.*—If the Second Gospel is actually a report, compiled for Roman readers, of the sermons delivered in that city by St. Peter, many of its peculiarities can be simply and naturally explained. The special privileges of the Prince of the Apostles are either omitted or but briefly indicated. There is no mention of Peter's walking upon the water

⁹⁶ *Adv. Haer.*, III, 1. *Writings of St. Irenaeus*, tr. by Roberts and Rambaut, Vol. I, p. 259; cfr. Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁹⁷ Pope, *ibid.*, II, 204.

to meet the Lord,⁸⁹ or of Christ's promise of the primacy,⁹⁰ or of the tax laid upon the Jews for the service of the Temple.¹ St. Peter's splendid profession of faith in the divinity of Christ² is reported in an abbreviated form,³ whereas his shameful denial of the Master and its prediction are related at length.⁴ The author of the Second Gospel carefully explains Jewish institutions and customs,⁵ translates Hebrew words,⁶ but assumes his readers to be familiar with Roman institutions,⁷ employs Latin phrases more frequently than the other Evangelists,⁸ and explains Greek words by their Latin equivalents.⁹ All this presupposes a class of readers conversant with Roman, but not with Hebrew customs and usages.

β) *Date of Composition*.—The Second Gospel itself does not furnish any clew which might aid us in establishing a more definite date of

⁸⁸ Matt. XIV, 28-33.

⁸⁹ Matt. XVI, 17-19.

¹ Matt. XVII, 24-26.

² Matt. XVI, 16.

³ Mark VIII, 29.

⁴ Mark XIV, 29-31, 54, 66, 72.

⁵ Mark VII, 3 sq.; XII, 42; XIV, 12.

⁶ Mark III, 17, 22; V, 41; VII, 11, 34; X, 46; XIV, 36.

⁷ Mark XV, 1, 39, 44, 45.

⁸ Mark XV, 39, 44 sq.; VI, 27; V, 9, 15.

⁹ Mark XII, 42; XV, 16. Other reasons in Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 201 sqq.

composition than the one we have obtained from the writings of Clement and Irenaeus. But, on the other hand, it contains nothing that would contradict the testimony of these writers.

3. The Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles

a) *Extrinsic Testimonies.*— a) *The Author.*— Luke, the companion and collaborator of St. Paul,¹⁰ is unanimously designated by ecclesiastical tradition as the author of the Third Gospel as well as of the Acts of the Apostles. The Muratorian Fragment speaks of him as follows: "*Tertio [tertium] Evangelii librum secundo Lucan. Lucas iste medicus post ascensum [ascensum] XPI, cum eo [eum] Paulus quasi ut iuris studiosum secundum adsumsisset, numeni [nomine] suo ex opinione conscribset [conscripsit]; dum tamen nec ipse dvidit [vidit] in carne, et ide[o] prout asequi [assequi] potuit; ita et ad [ab] nativitate Iohannis ex decipolis [discipulis] incipet [incepit] dicere.*"¹¹ And in another place: "*Acta autem omnium apostolorum sub uno libro scripta sunt. Lucas optime*

¹⁰ Col. IV, 14; Phm. V, 24; 2 Tim. IV, 11.

¹¹ Lines 2 sqq.; cfr. Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 224. Text of the Muratorian Fragment, with apparatus criticus and bibliography, in Th. Zahn, *Grundriss d. Geschichte d. neutestamentl. Kanons* (Leipsic, 1904), pp. 76-81.

*Theophile comprehendit, quia sub praesentia eius singula gerebantur, sicut et semote passionem Petri evidenter declarat, sed et profec-tionem Pauli ab urbe ad Spaniam proficis-centis."*¹²

β) *Date of Composition.*—We have no definite information as to the time when St. Luke composed his Gospel or the Acts of the Apostles.

b) *Intrinsic Criteria.*—a) According to an ancient tradition, St. Luke, who was a physician of Antiochian parentage, accompanied St. Paul on his missionary journeys. It is in this twofold capacity that the author of the Third Gospel and of the Acts presents himself to the reader. He employs the technical terminology of Greek medicine in describing diseases and their symptoms,¹³ and dwells with a certain predilection on the origin, duration, peculiarities, and cure of the maladies healed by Jesus.¹⁴ That the author was a companion of St. Paul can be inferred from those sections of the Acts in which he speaks in the first person plural (the so-called We-sections).¹⁵ Besides, the vocabulary of the Third Gospel and that of the

¹² Lines 34 sqq.

¹³ Luke IV, 38; XXII, 44; Acts XXVIII, 8.

¹⁴ Luke IV, 38-40; VIII, 43-56; Acts III, 2 sqq.; IV, 22; IX, 33 sqq.

¹⁵ Acts XVI, 10-17; XX, 4-16; XXI, 1-18; XXVII, 1-28, 16.

Acts are "remarkably Pauline in tone."¹⁶ Consequently, we are justified in concluding that St. Luke is the author both of the Third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles.

β) Date of Composition.—According to Acts I, 1, the Third Gospel was written before the Acts. Hence if we can ascertain the date of the composition of the latter, we shall have a definite clue for dating the former. The Acts of the Apostles must have been completed before the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of St. Paul, because the fall of the city is nowhere mentioned, despite the fact that in the last chapter the Jews are threatened with the divine vengeance,¹⁷ and it is reported that St. Paul "remained two whole years in his own hired lodging, . . . preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, without prohibition."¹⁸ Had St. Luke written *after* the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of St. Paul, he could not have passed over these two important facts in silence. Consequently, the Acts of the Apostles must have been completed towards the end of the first year of the cap-

¹⁶ Pope, "*Aids*," Vol. II (1918), pp. 229 sq.

¹⁷ Acts XXVIII, 25 sqq.

¹⁸ Acts XXVIII, 30 sq.

tivity of St. Paul, *i. e.*, about A. D. 63 or 64, and it is reasonable to conclude that the Third Gospel, which stands in such intimate relation to the Acts, was composed in the early part of that captivity, *i. e.*, about 62 or 63.¹⁹

4. The Gospel of St. John

a) *Extrinsic Criteria.*— a) *The Author.*— Three mutually independent witnesses of the latter half of the second century—the writer of the Muratorian Fragment, Clement of Alexandria, and St. Irenaeus—expressly designate John the “beloved disciple,” the son of Zebedee, as the author of the Fourth Gospel. The Muratorian Fragment (middle of the second century) says: “*Quarti Evangeliorum Johannis ex decipolis [discipulis] cohortantibus condiscipulis et eps [episcopis] suis dixit: conjejunate mihi: odie [hodie] triduo [triduum], et qui[d] cuique fuerit revelatum, alterutrum nobis enarremus. Eadem nocte revelatum andreae ex apostolis, ut recognoscentibus cun[c]tis Johannis suo nomine cun[c]ta describ[e]ret,*”²⁰ etc. Clement of Alexandria, who has preserved for us several

¹⁹ Cfr. L. C. Fillion, S.S., *The Life of Christ*, tr. by N. Thompson, Vol. I, pp. 57 sqq.

²⁰ Lines 9 sqq.; cfr. Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 275 sq.

traditions about St. John, ²¹ reports: "And John, the last of them all [namely, of the four Evangelists], when he noticed that in the Gospels compiled by the others were narrated the things pertaining to the body [*i. e.*, humanity] of Christ, being himself filled with the breath of the Divine Spirit, wrote a spiritual Gospel at the request of his acquaintances." ²² St. Irenaeus repeatedly speaks of the Fourth Gospel as the work of "John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast," adding that the Gospel was written "at Ephesus in Asia." ²³ This testimony is of great importance, for Clement was a native of Asia, and in his boyhood days had known St. Polycarp, a pupil of St. John. How well he remembered this witness of the Apostolic age may be seen from his Letter to Florinus, who was also a disciple of Polycarp, but had shown an inclination to join the Gnostic sect of the Valentinians. "While I was still a boy," Clement writes, "I knew thee in lower Asia with Polycarp. . . . I am able to describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and discoursed. . . . as he told of

²¹ *Quis Dives Salvetur*, XLII; *Loeb Classical Library, Clement of Alexandria*, tr. by G. W. Butterworth, London, 1919, pp. 357 sqq.

²² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, VI, XIV, 7; *P. G.*, XX, 552.

²³ *Adv. Haer.*, III, 1, 1; Roberts' and Rambaut's translation, Vol. I, p. 259.

his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord, and about his miracles and teaching, having received them from eyewitnesses of 'the Word of Life.' Polycarp related all things in harmony with the Scriptures. These things were told to me by the mercy of God, and I listened to them attentively, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart." ²⁴

"Thus," observes Fr. Pope, "Irenaeus was an attentive hearer of Polycarp, who was over thirty years of age when John died and who survived him another fifty years. Nor is this all; for Irenaeus succeeded in the see of Lyons the venerable Pothinus, who died a martyr at the age of ninety and upwards, A.D. 177, in the persecution at Vienne."²⁵ Eusebius tells us that Pothinus, too, had been 'a hearer of Polycarp in his youth.'²⁶ Thus Pothinus would have been about twenty years of age when John died in A.D. 104. Consequently, while a gap of one hundred years separates the death of Irenaeus from that of John, this gap is bridged over in a singularly complete fashion,

²⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, xx, 4-7 (*P. G.*, XX, 484 sq.); cfr. Pope, *Aids*, II, 271.

²⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 1, 29.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, V, v, 8.

since Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John, and Irenaeus' immediate predecessor in the see of Lyons was another disciple of Polycarp, and, like him, had lived to an advanced age. Moreover it will have been noticed that in the above extracts St. Irenaeus mentions others who had 'seen the Lord.' These are, apparently, the 'Elders' to whom he refers so constantly in his writings."²⁷

Truly, as Professor F. Tillmann observes, "concerning none of the other Gospels does the argument from tradition lead through such a brilliant and complete chain of witnesses to the very time of its origin, as in the case of the Fourth Gospel."²⁸

β) *Date of Composition*.—Concerning the date of this Gospel all we learn from the most ancient witnesses is that John wrote his Gospel after Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written theirs. Clement of Alexandria and St. Irenaeus say so explicitly, and the Muratorian Fragment intimates as much by the sequence in which it lists the Gospels, putting the Johannine Gospel fourth and last.

²⁷ *Adv. Haer.*, I, Prol., 2; I, xv, 6, 627; II, 22, 5, 785 etc.; Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 271 sq. See J. Chapman, *John the Presbyter*, pp. 15 sq.

²⁸ Esser-Mausbach, *Religion, Christentum, Kirche*, Vol. II, 5th ed., Kempten, 1923, p. 277.

b) *Intrinsic Criteria*.— a) *The Author*.— Judging from the contents of the Fourth Gospel, its author must have been a Jew by birth. This is attested by the numerous Hebrew and Aramaic words and phrases which he employs²⁹ and by the intimate knowledge of Jewish customs and traditions which he displays.³⁰ Though written by a Jew, however, the Fourth Gospel was not intended for Jews, as may be gathered from the explanations it gives of Aramaic terms and Jewish customs.³¹ That the author was a native of Palestine is evident from his familiarity with the geography of the Holy Land.³² That he was an eye-witness of the events which he narrates is indicated by the thrice repeated "we" of the prologue,³³ by the inclusion of many intimate details,³⁴ and by the writer's explicit declaration³⁵ that he had personally witnessed what he reported. In several passages the author is more definitely described as "that disciple

²⁹ ῥαββι (I, 50), ῥαββουνι (XX, 16), Μεσσίας (I, 42), Βηθεσδα (V, 2), μάννα (VI, 31) Γαββαθα (XIX, 13).

³⁰ John II, 6, 13; V, 31 sqq.; VI, 4; VII, 2; XVIII, 28.

³¹ John I, 38, 41 sq.; IX, 7; XIX, 13, 17; II, 6; XIX, 40 sqq.

³² John XI, 18; V, 2; XVIII, 1; XIX, 20.

³³ John I, 14, 16.

³⁴ John I, 35-43.

³⁵ John XIX, 35.

whom Jesus loved.”³⁶ If we add to this the fact that, where the calling of the first two disciples is described,³⁷ the name of only one of them is mentioned, and that the Fourth Gospel records the calling of Peter and Andrew, but not that of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who are always mentioned together by the Synoptics, we have every reason to conclude that the author of the Fourth Gospel can have been none other than either James or John. Since St. James died a martyr in 42, St. John must have composed the Fourth Gospel.³⁸

³⁶ John XIII, 23-25; XIX, 26-35; XX, 2-10; John XXI, 20, 24.

³⁷ John I, 35 sqq.

³⁸ Acts XII, 2. On the authenticity of the Gospel of St. John there exists a vast literature. The most recent contribution is *The Son of Zebedee and the Fourth Gospel*, by H. P. V. Nunn (London, 1927.) This Protestant writer ranges himself on the side of the old orthodox theologians who rightly regard John, the son of Zebedee, as the writer of the Fourth Gospel. He does not approach the problem in the manner of a theologian, but treats it throughout according to the best method of historical criticism. “This,” says W. H. Kent in a review of Nunn’s monograph, “is certainly the surest and most effective method of conducting the discussion. For on this matter at any rate, too many modern critics have practically abandoned their professed principles and adopted an attitude of authority and dogmatism. This point has been very forcibly put by Professor Sanday in a passage which Mr. Nunn takes as an appropriate watchword, to wit: ‘The truth is that the criticism of the Fourth Gospel on the Liberal side has become largely conventional; one writer after another repeats certain stereotyped formulæ without testing them. It is high time

β) *Date of Composition.*—We have but one intimation of the date of composition of the Fourth Gospel. It is John XXI, 20–23, which permits us to infer that the Apostle was far advanced in years when he wrote the so-called supplementary chapter (XXI) of his Gospel. If this chapter was not composed by St. John, but added by another writer, this must have been done while St. John was still alive, because if he had been dead, the explanation of the Lord's statement given in verse 23 would probably have been different. Consequently, the Fourth Gospel must have been composed towards the end of the first century.

that they were really tested and confronted with the facts.' The evidence brought together [by Mr. Nunn] may well suffice to show that these words are well warranted. And we find some amazing instances of the air of authority assumed by the 'competent critics' of the present day, or, to adopt the felicitous phrase of one of that goodly company, 'those who believe themselves entitled to speak in the name of criticism.' However appropriate it may be in other fields, this pontifical authority seems singularly out of place in matters of historical criticism, which should surely be decided in the dry light of facts and carefully tested evidence." (*Tablet*, London, Dec. 3, 1927.) For an effective defence of the Fourth Gospel against the sophisms of modern Rationalists, see L. C. Fillion, S.S., *The Life of Christ*, tr. by N. Thompson, Vol. I, St. Louis, 1928, pp. 486–495; F. Godet, *Commentaire sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean*, 2nd ed., Vol. I, Paris, 1900; J. M. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Jean*, Paris, 1925. The best English commentary is that by Westcott (Prot.). A good study of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel will be found in Archbishop McIntyre's *St. John*, London, 1899.

5. The Epistles of St. Paul

a) *Extrinsic Criteria*.—a) *The Author*.—The Pauline authorship of all the Epistles attributed to the Apostle Paul, with the exception of that addressed to the Hebrews, is attested by the Muratorian Fragment,³⁹ and confirmed by the second-century Syriac version known as the Peshitto, and the Latin Itala, also of the second century, both of which contain all the canonical Epistles of St. Paul. An indirect proof for the authenticity of these letters is found in the quotations from them scattered through the writings of the Apostolic Fathers at the beginning of the second century. Aside from the short letter to Philemon, there is not one among the fourteen Epistles of St. Paul which is not cited by the early Fathers.

β) *Date of Composition*.—Tradition has handed down to us no certain information regarding the date of composition of the different Epistles of St. Paul.

b) *Intrinsic Criteria*.—a) *The Author*.—All the Pauline Epistles, with the sole exception of that addressed to the Hebrews, begin with the name of the writer ("Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ"; "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle

³⁹ Lines 39 sqq.

of Jesus Christ," etc.), thus clearly and definitely testifying to their Pauline authorship. All of them, moreover, are so intimately interrelated by their peculiar doctrinal content, that if one is genuine, the rest must necessarily be genuine too. The same agreement appears (aside from the Epistle to the Hebrews) in the external form, the unity of disposition, and the style of all the different letters.

The *Epistle to the Hebrews*, as we have noted, occupies an exceptional position among the Letters of St. Paul, but its peculiar characteristics are not such as to compel us to deny its Pauline authorship. While the contents are in complete harmony with the ideas set forth in the other Pauline Epistles, the deviations result mainly from the absence of the epistolary form, the peculiar character of the treatise, the manner in which the Old Testament is cited therein, and the purity and perfection of the style. These facts can be satisfactorily accounted for by the assumption, based upon ancient tradition, that this Epistle was outlined by St. Paul, but drawn up by one of his pupils.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul*, tr. by J. L. Stoddard, Vol. I, London, 1926, pp. 355 sqq. This opinion, which can be traced to Origen, is shared by the majority of critics and exegetes at the present day. "Paul would then have furnished the ideas and inspiration, and a disciple of Paul, known only to God, would

β) *Date of Composition*.—The time when the different Epistles were written can be inferred from their subject-matter,—quite definitely in the case of some of them, more or less approx-

have collected them into a whole from memory, adding the necessary explanations to them. It is to him that the diction, the arrangement of the parts, in a word the composition, is due. He was the writer of a work of which St. Paul remains the author. It was said formerly in the same sense that the second Gospel was the Gospel of Peter, and the third Gospel that of Paul, because St. Mark and St. Luke were thought to have reproduced respectively the preaching of the two great Apostles. The hypothesis of Origen is sufficiently elastic to yield to all the requirements of criticism. It takes account of the similitudes and the differences, and satisfies the data of tradition. We think it necessary to adhere to this, and to-day the majority of Catholics, with infinite shades of opinion that it is neither possible nor useful to discuss, think the same. Directly or indirectly, the basis of the Epistle is Paul's; the form is that of an unknown person, whose name is known to God alone." (Prat, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 362 sq.) Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.*, VI, 25) has preserved for us the actual words of Origen: 'Εγὼ δὲ ἀποφαινόμενος εἶπομι' ἄν ὅτι τὰ μὲν νοήματα τοῦ Ἀποστόλου ἐστὶν ἡ δὲ φράσις καὶ ἡ σύνθεσις ἀπομνημονεύσαντός τινος τὰ ἀποστολικά καὶ ὥσπερ εἰ σχολιογράφησαντος τὰ εἰρημένα ὑπὸ τοῦ διδασκάλου. He adds that if any church regards the Epistle as being Paul's, that Church is to be praised, for the ancients have handed down this opinion to us not without cause. But God only knows who really wrote it (τίς δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς Θεὸς οἶδεν). Some propose Clement of Rome; others Luke. Thus, according to Origen, the editor of the Epistle is not a simple copyist writing under dictation, but a writer, whose is the diction and the composition, but who records the thoughts and words of the Apostle, which he preserved in his memory and which he explains or comments upon, when there is need of it, as formerly grammarians and annotators did in the case of obscure passages of the classic authors." (Prat, *l.c.*)

imately in the case of others. All were written between the end of the forties or the beginning of the fifties and the year 67 A. D. The purpose of the present treatise makes it unnecessary to discuss this problem at length.⁴¹

2. *Credibility of the New Testament*

We maintain that the writings of the New Testament are entirely trustworthy.

To prove this thesis we have to show: (1) that the New Testament writers were able to ascertain and report the facts; (2) that they were willing to tell the truth, and (3) that their statements are borne out by non-Biblical authorities.

1. *The New Testament writers were able to ascertain and report the facts.*

A) *The authors of the four Gospels* were close to the events which they narrate. Two of them, St. Matthew and St. John, were Apostles of Jesus Christ, and, as such, eye-witnesses of most of the occurrences which they report. The other two, St. Mark and St. Luke, while not so favor-

⁴¹ Prat, *op. cit.*; J. Belser, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 2nd ed., Freiburg, 1905; M. Seisenberger, *Practical Handbook for the Study of the Scripture*, new revised edition, N. Y., 1925, pp. 404 sqq.; Brüll-Messmer, *Outlines of Bible Knowledge*, 2nd ed., Freiburg, 1927, pp. 137 sqq.; J. M. Simon, *A Scripture Manual*, Vol. II; New York, 1928, pp. 285 sqq.

ably placed, nevertheless, as tradition assures us, had intimate contact with eye-witnesses. That the Evangelists possessed the power of observation and the knowledge necessary to report the facts, is evident from their writings. To report the utterances and deeds of Christ, nay, even His miracles, merely required the capacity of recording what they had themselves seen or heard, or learned from others. For this the normal functioning of the senses and a sound judgment were quite sufficient. That the Evangelists possessed these qualifications their writings amply attest.

The just historical evaluation of the Gospels is intimately bound up with the question of the mutual relationship of the three Synoptics among themselves and to the Fourth Gospel.

The Synoptic Problem.—The first three Gospels, composed, respectively, by SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, show a remarkable agreement both in form and content, and are therefore called Synoptic (from *σύνοψις*, a general view, or a collection of heads or parts so arranged as to exhibit a general view of a whole). They deal for the most part, though not always in identical order, with the same subjects, almost completely limit the public activity of Jesus to Galilee, report His journey to Jerusalem for the

celebration of the Pasch, His death on the cross, His Resurrection, and His appearances in a glorified body. In doing so, the Synoptics often employ identical words and phrases. The resemblance between these three Gospels is still more striking when they are compared with the fourth. The Gospel of St. John describes the public activities of the Saviour as centering about Judea and reports His discourses in a different style and method than the Synoptics. We do not, of course, mean to deny that the first three Gospels also differ considerably from one another in matter and manner of treatment. The one thing all four have in common is the story of the Passion and the Resurrection of Christ.

How are we to explain the resemblances between the Gospels of SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke? Different theories have been devised for this purpose. All of them can, however, be reduced to three.

a) The first of these theories (espoused by Gieseler, Kaulen, and Cornely) assumes that the Synoptics, in composing their Gospels, drew exclusively from *oral tradition*, which, in consequence of the Apostolic preaching, had gradually been reduced to a certain uniformity. How-

ever, the resemblances between the three writers, sometimes involving literal identity, cannot be explained solely on the ground of a common oral tradition. If they could, the parallel passages in the Fourth Gospel would have to show a greater similarity with the corresponding portions of the Synoptics, and such important matters as the Lord's Prayer and the words by which Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist would not differ as widely as they do. Moreover, St. Luke in the introduction to his Gospel expressly refers to written sources.

β) The theory of a *twofold source* was championed by Schleiermacher, Holtzmann, Weiss, and Protestant exegetes generally assume that St. Mark wrote his Gospel first, and it was used by SS. Matthew and Luke as their principal source. In addition, the latter two Evangelists are said to have employed a secondary source, which contained mainly sayings (*logia*) of Christ. This theory seems untenable for two reasons. First, we have no historical information that there was such a collection of *logia*, whereas, secondly, there is undeniable evidence that St. Matthew, not St. Mark, was the first one to write a Gospel, and that our Greek Matthew is a translation of an Aramaic original,

and not a collection of materials taken from the Gospel of St. Mark, the *logia*, and other sources peculiar to St. Matthew.⁴²

γ) Zahn (Prot.), Belser, and other exegetes seek to solve the Synoptic Problem by pointing to the mutual interdependence of the three Gospels. According to tradition, St. Matthew was the first to write a Gospel. St. Mark wrote somewhat later. He based his story on information received from St. Peter, who had been an eyewitness to the facts. This explains the vividness of his descriptions. No doubt St. Mark was acquainted with the Aramaic Gospel of St. Matthew and made use of it in compiling his own narrative, which frequently takes the form of a brief summary. The differences in style between these two Evangelists are a result of the translation of the Aramaic original of St. Matthew by St. Mark. Where both agree in form and subject-matter, we are justified in assuming that the translator of the Aramaic Matthew utilized the Greek Mark. St. Luke, on his part, probably made use of St. Mark and of the Aramaic and Greek texts of Matthew and, besides,

⁴² The Biblical Commission has rejected this theory in a decision issued June 26, 1912. See Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, *Enchiridion*, 16th and 17th ed., Freiburg i. B., 1928, n. 2164 sqq. English translation in M. Seisenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 492. Cfr. Knabenbauer, l. c.

employed other sources unknown to us. This theory is preferable to the other two because it satisfactorily explains both the resemblances and the divergencies of the first three Gospels and, moreover, is in perfect harmony with ecclesiastical tradition.

The Gospel of St. John in its Relation to the Synoptics.—The differences existing between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics are easily explained if we bear in mind the purpose of the Johannine Gospel, the time of its composition, the conditions under which it was written, and the individuality of its author. St. John wrote long after the other three Evangelists and with their Gospels before him. He endeavored to supply the deficiencies and to clarify the obscurities of the Synoptics. While the latter are almost exclusively occupied with Christ's activity in Galilee, St. John emphasizes His ministry in Judea. While the Synoptics pay greater attention to the human aspects of the Redeemer, St. John regards it as the chief object of his Gospel to show that Jesus was the true Son of God, identical in substance with the Father. Christ's method of teaching in the Fourth Gospel differs from that described by the Synoptics. The difference is conditioned mainly by the character of His hearers, who in Galilee

were ordinary peasants, whereas in Judea He preached to men learned in the Mosaic law and other representatives of the cultured classes. The differences in literary style between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics are attributable, at least in part, to each writer's independent conception of his subject and to certain individual peculiarities.

Having studied the interdependence of the four Gospels, we now return to the question of their value as historical documents. As we have seen, St. Mark bases his account upon eye-witnesses, S. Peter (and probably Matthew), while St. Luke depends largely on SS. Mark and Matthew and upon other oral and written sources unknown to us. Consequently, only the reports of Matthew, Peter, and John, and the traditions used by Luke can claim independent value. What precisely is their value? Were these eye-witnesses able to give a reliable account of Christ's life and teaching several decades after His departure? We answer, yes, for the following reasons:

a) Aside from the fact, already mentioned on a previous page, that the Oriental memory is extraordinarily tenacious, the *traditional method of teaching* employed by the Jewish rabbis must have had considerable influence on

the disciples of Jesus. This method consisted in impressing the words of the teacher on the pupils by frequent repetition. So great was the importance which the rabbis attached to the correct memorizing of their doctrines that they had a proverb which said that to forget an important head of doctrine was as reprehensible as to endanger one's life without necessity. The highest praise given to a pupil was that his memory was like a well-cemented cistern which did not lose a drop of the water poured into it.⁴³ Though Jesus was not a rabbi in the ordinary sense of the term, He appeared in public as a teacher, and as such had to adhere more or less closely to the traditional method. The deep impression which He made upon His disciples was the best guaranty that the doctrines He inculcated would stick in their memory. The remembrance of what they had seen and heard was bound to be all the livelier the more intimate was their relation to the Master and the more impressive the occasions upon which He spoke. Thus we can easily understand why the disciple "whom Jesus loved," and who leaned upon His breast at the Last Supper, was able to report the Master's parting words with such detail.

⁴³ E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. II, 4th ed., Leipsic, 1907, pp. 384 sq.

β) The *form* in which Jesus clothed His discourses was calculated to make them easily remembered. He employed striking similes and parables taken from everyday life and well adapted to the understanding of His hearers. His doctrines were embodied in brief and piquant maxims that easily impressed them upon the memory.

γ) Finally, the period of time that separates the Gospels from the events which they record is not long. The first three Gospels were written when many of those who had seen and heard Jesus Christ were still alive. St. Paul tells us that our Divine Redeemer after His Resurrection appeared to more than five hundred brethren, most of whom were still among the living when the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written.⁴⁴ Hence it was not at all difficult for the Evangelists to ascertain and substantiate the facts by inquiry and comparison of testimonies. The Gospel of St. John, it is true, is of a somewhat later date, but it was composed by one who had been particularly near and dear to Jesus, and therefore its credibility cannot reasonably be doubted.

In addition to this we must not forget that

⁴⁴ 1 Cor. XV, 6.

all four Evangelists may have made use of written records composed by eye-witnesses before the Gospels were set down.

The demonstrative force of these arguments in no wise depends on any one of the theories which have been devised for the solution of the Synoptic Problem. No matter which of these theories we may adopt, the credibility of the Gospels remains unaffected.⁴⁵

B) *The Apostle Paul*.—St Paul did not know Jesus personally, but in view of his extensive missionary activities it is safe to assume that He was thoroughly familiar not only with His teachings, but also with the circumstances of His earthly life. For since the life of our Saviour cannot be separated from His teaching, a successful propagation of the latter without regard to the former would be unthinkable. The Pauline Epistles, it is true, contain few concrete incidents from the life of Christ, but we must remember that they were written almost without exception to faithful Christian believ-

⁴⁵ Esser-Mausbach, *Religion, Christentum, Kirche*, Vol. II, 5th ed.; Th. Zahn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 3rd ed., Leipzig, 1906; J. E. Belser, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 2nd ed., Freiburg, 1905; M. Lepin, *Les Évangiles Canoniques*, Vol. I, 4th ed., Paris, 1911, pp. 1598–1750; L. C. Fillion, *The Life of Christ*, tr. by N. Thompson, Vol. I, pp. 28 sqq., 481 sqq.

ers, who were familiar with the story of the Master's life. Besides, the attention of the Fourth Evangelist is occupied with the glorified heavenly Christ rather than His earthly appearance.⁴⁶ But the personal traits and facts which St. Paul mentions in His Epistles permit us to see clearly that he was conversant with the life and deeds of Christ, not only in a general way, but in detail. Thus he mentions His descent from David according to the flesh,⁴⁷ assures the Galatians that he has "set forth Christ crucified before their eyes,"⁴⁸ speaks of the night in which Jesus was betrayed and instituted the Holy Eucharist, relates that the glorified Master was seen after His Resurrection by a large number of persons, and so forth.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Cfr. 2 Cor. IV, 4; F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul*, tr. by J. L. Stoddard, Vol. II, London, 1927, pp. 22-26, 154-159; L. C. Fillion, S.S., "Jésus ou Paul?" in the *Revue du Clergé Français*, 1912.

⁴⁷ Rom. I, 3.

⁴⁸ Gal. III, 1.

⁴⁹ 1 Cor. XI, 23 sq.; 1 Cor. XV, 5 sqq. "The allusions to the earthly life of Jesus are as numerous in Paul's Epistles as in the other Apostolic writings, outside of the Gospels, whose object was precisely to narrate it. Proportionally there are even fewer allusions to the facts of the Gospels in the Apocalypse, in the Catholic Epistles, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the Acts of the Apostles than in the letters of the Doctor of the Gentiles. Let us judge of this by the following brief sketch. Before coming to this earth, Christ pre-existed in the form of God (Phil. II, 6); He was rich with all the riches of Heaven (2 Cor. VIII, 9). At the end

Some find it strange that St. Paul in his Epistles so rarely refers to sayings of the Lord. In only two passages does he quote the Master

of the providential preparations for the event and at the time indicated by the divine decrees, He, the Son of God, is sent by His Father to accomplish the work of salvation (Gal. IV, 4; Rom. VIII, 3; III, 25 f.; V, 7). Jesus is the descendant of Abraham (Gal. III, 16), the Son of David (Rom. I, 3; XV, 12; 2 Tim. II, 8), the glory of the Hebrew people (Rom. IX, 5). He is born of a woman under the régime of the Law (Gal. IV, 4); He lives in the midst of Jews (Rom. XV, 8), and Jerusalem is the centre of His Church (Gal. I, 17; Rom. XV, 19-27). He is truly man, in all respects like ourselves (Rom. V, 15; 1 Cor. XV, 21 f.; 1 Tim. II, 5), yet without sin (2 Cor. V, 21). He has brethren according to the flesh (1 Cor. IX, 5), one of whom, James, is designated by name (Gal. I, 19; II, 29). In order that they should collaborate with Him and continue His work, He surrounds Himself with Apostles (1 Cor. IX, 5, 14), to the number of twelve (1 Cor. XV, 5); three among them, Peter, James, and John, are expressly mentioned (Gal. I, 18 f.; II, 9); but Cephas-Peter occupies the highest rank among them (1 Cor. IX, 5). In confiding to the Apostles the care of preaching His doctrine, He gives them the right to live by the Gospel (1 Cor. IX, 15) and the power to work miracles (2 Cor. XII, 19). After having led on earth a life of poverty (2 Cor. VIII, 9), subjection (Phil. II, 8), obedience (Rom. V, 19), and holiness (Rom. I, 4), He voluntarily gives Himself up to His enemies (Gal. I, 4; II, 20), the Jews, who put Him to death. The institution of the Eucharist is related by Paul with more precision of detail than in the Gospel. Paul mentions especially the treason of that tragic night, which recalls the *nox erat* of St. John. If the Passion is described on broad lines, we know that, in speaking to catechumens, the Apostle made a striking picture of it (Gal. III, 1). He tells us often of the cross (1 Cor. II, 2 etc.), the blood (Rom. III, 25 etc.), and even of the nails (Col. II, 12). The executioners of Jesus are the Jews (1 Thess. II, 15) and the princes of this world (Eph. I, 7; II, 13). The Passion took place towards Easter, at the time of the *azymoi* (1 Cor. V, 6-8), under Pontius

directly⁵⁰ and only on two occasions does he attribute precepts directly to Him.⁵¹ Allusions to words of Jesus occur more frequently, and in substance Paul's teaching fully agrees with that of His Master.⁵² The fact that so few sayings of Jesus are literally quoted in the Pauline Epistles will seem less surprising if we remember that the same is true of the letters of the other Apostles (Peter, James, John, Jude), who had en-

Pilate (1 Tim. VI, 2). The burial is not forgotten (1 Cor. XV, 4), because it gives to Baptism its figurative value (Rom. VI, 4; Col. II, 12). But Paul lays more stress on the Resurrection on the third day and on the different manifestations of the risen Christ (1 Cor. XV, 4-7). Jesus Christ has ascended into Heaven (Eph. IV, 8-10), is seated on the right hand of the Father (Eph. I, 20; II, 6), and will return to judge the living and the dead (1 Thess. I, 10) . . . Such is an epitome of Paul's picture of Jesus. It is more than a sketch; it is a lifelike portrait drawn with firm lines." (F. Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul*, Vol. II, pp. 154 sq.)

⁵⁰ Acts XX, 35; 1 Cor. XI, 23 sqq.

⁵¹ 1 Cor. VII, 10 and IX, 14.

⁵² Prat devotes practically the whole of his two classic volumes, *The Theology of St. Paul*, tr. by John L. Stoddard, 2 vols., London, 1926 f., to establish the identity of St. Paul's theology with that of His Master. After a review of some of the leading points of identity (Vol. II, p. 156) he says: "Finally, in order to verify the results of this rapid review, we ought to take some terms of comparison; for example, the Sermon on the Mount or the great eschatological discourse. Here the numerous similitudes, both in substance and in form, are instantly obvious, and can be traced back evidently to the same source—namely, the teaching of Jesus. The fact is so clear that no sensible critic will dispute it." Cfr. also Dausch, *Jesus und Paulus*, Münster i. W., 1911 (collection *Biblische Fragen*); Murillo, *Paulus et Pauli Scripta*, Vol. I, Rome, 1926, pp. 476-481.

joyed intimate personal converse with the Master for a number of years. The explanation probably is that when the Apostles began their missionary labors, there was as yet no written record containing the sayings of Jesus, and even after the first three Gospels were written and circulated, it took some time before the heralds of the faith became accustomed to regard and quote these writings as of equal authority with the books of the Old Testament.

That St. Paul was well acquainted with the life and teachings of Christ and, therefore, in a position to inform his hearers concerning them, is explained (aside from the supernatural revelation which he had received) by the fact that he was on intimate terms with the other Apostles.⁵³ He himself relates, and confirms the truth of his statement by a solemn oath, that he visited Jerusalem during the early days of his ministry to see St. Peter, stayed with him for fifteen days, and on that occasion became acquainted with St. James, the brother of the Lord.⁵⁴ Fourteen years later, he adds, he again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus and compared the gospel which he had preached to the Gentiles with that of the chief Apostles,

⁵³ Gal. I, 12. Cfr. Acts IX, 27; XV, 2.

⁵⁴ Gal. I, 18 sqq.

Peter, James, and John, and no one took exception to his teaching.⁵⁵

2. *The New Testament writers wished to tell the truth.*

a) *The Evangelists.*—St. Luke says in the introduction to his Gospel that he was not content with repeating what he had heard from others, but diligently sought to ascertain and report only verified historical facts. The book known as Acts of the Apostles, which forms the continuation of St. Luke's Gospel and, like the latter, is dedicated to Theophilus, was evidently composed with the same object in view.

The credibility of the third, as well as of the other Gospels, is further attested by the style, the contents, and the circumstances under which they were written.

The *style of the Evangelists* is purely objective. They simply report what they had seen and heard. The subjective impression which the facts recorded must have made on their minds is nowhere mentioned. The most sublime as well as the most insignificant occurrences are related in equally simple and succinct language. There

⁵⁵ Gal. II, 1 sq., 6 sqq.; cfr. J. J. I. Döllinger, *Christentum und Kirche*, Ratisbon, 1860, pp. 90 sq.

is no attempt at eloquence, no effort to embellish the text with rhetorical artifices, no injection of personal reflections, but a simple and manifest desire to let the facts speak for themselves. The Evangelists narrate the most astounding events without showing a trace of astonishment; they frankly avow their own errors, follies, and foibles, without trying to palliate them; they record the unjust condemnation of their Master and the odious and blasphemous conduct of His enemies without a word of criticism or complaint; they narrate the treason of Judas, the cowardice of Pilate, and the bloodthirsty wrath of the Jewish people without a sign of indignation or censure.

So much for the form of the Gospels. The *subject-matter* with which they deal is chiefly the public career of Jesus. St. Matthew and St. Luke give us but little information about His infancy. His birth and its attendant circumstances are reported in some detail, but what happened during the long period which elapsed between the return of the Holy Family from Egypt and the beginning of Christ's public ministry—about twenty-eight years—we are not told, with the sole exception of the journey to Jerusalem and the twelve-year-old Boy's stay in

the Temple. All of which proves that the Evangelists had but one aim, namely, to tell what had actually happened. The boyhood of Jesus afforded a splendid opportunity for poetical embellishment, as the so-called apocryphal gospels show. In describing the public life of Our Lord the Evangelists had to stick closely to the facts, as there were many witnesses still alive who could have promptly detected and denounced any fictitious additaments.

The *circumstances* under which the Evangelists wrote also show that their only object was to tell the truth. The publication of the Gospels did not bring them any material advantage; on the contrary, since the Person, the teaching, and the work of Christ had from the very beginning of His career been "unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the gentiles foolishness," ⁵⁶ those who championed the cause of Christianity had nothing but hatred and persecution to expect for their efforts.

Thus the Gospels testify on every page to the unselfish and disinterested veracity of their authors. Under such conditions, fraud and deception are not likely to creep in, and the only motive that can possibly have inspired the Evan-

⁵⁶ 1 Cor. I, 23.

gelists to write, was a sincere desire to tell the truth and to spread it far and wide, so as to convert humanity to Christ.⁵⁷

b) *St. Paul* had been an enemy of Jesus Christ and had persecuted His followers with a deadly hatred. He changed his attitude suddenly and became an ardent defender and herald of the Christian faith, who later on was able to say of himself that he had "labored more abundantly" for its extension than all the other Apostles. Such a radical conversion could result only from a change of heart wrought by the power of objective truth. When Paul, after his experience at Damascus, studied the life and doctrines of the Redeemer, he became convinced of the truth of the new religion. For this reason he continually reaffirms the facts which formed the foundation of his belief.⁵⁸ And because the conviction of the truth of Christianity is so firmly rooted in his soul, he is compelled by an irresistible impulse to preach the Gospel everywhere.⁵⁹ In discharging this task he dreads

⁵⁷ P. Batiffol, *The Credibility of the Gospels* (Engl. trans., London, 1912); Lepin, *Christ and the Gospel* (Engl. trans. Phila., 1910); E. Jacques, *La Crédibilité des Évangiles*, Paris, 1913; Mangenot, *Les Évangiles Synoptiques*, Paris, 1911.

⁵⁸ 1 Cor. XV, 14.

⁵⁹ 1 Cor. IX, 16, 19 sqq.

neither labor nor anxiety, neither hatred nor persecution.⁶⁰ History knows of no purely human witness who for reliability and veracity could be compared to St. Paul.

3. *The credibility of the New Testament is confirmed by extra-Biblical evidence, bearing in part on the political situation and social conditions of Palestine and in part directly on the life of Christ and the first beginnings of Christianity.*

A) *The political situation of Palestine at the beginning of the Christian era* is outlined in the third Gospel, where St. Luke describes the public appearance of the Baptist.⁶¹ Modern historical research has shown that St. Luke's account agrees substantially with what we know from secular sources. Tiberius, in the fifteenth year of whose reign John the Baptist began his public career, ruled the Roman Empire from 14 to 37 A. D.⁶² Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea from 26 to 36 A. D.⁶³ Herod Antipas,

⁶⁰ 2 Cor. VI, 4 sqq.; XI, 23 sqq.

⁶¹ Luke III, 1 sq.

⁶² E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. I, 5th ed., p. 328; L. C. Fillion, S.S., *The Life of Christ*, tr. by N. Thompson, Vol. I, pp. 138 sq.

⁶³ Schürer, *op. cit.*, pp. 487 sqq.; Fillion, *op. cit.*, pp. 134 sqq.; Müller, *Pontius Pilatus*, Stuttgart, 1888 (gives a list of earlier writings on Pilate); Rosières, *Ponce Pilate*, Paris, 1883; A. S. Barnes in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII, pp. 83 sq.

the son of Herod the Great, ruled as tetrarch of Galilee from 4 B. C. to 39 A. D.⁶⁴ His stepbrother, Philip (4 B. C. to 34 A. D.) acted as administrator of several districts which are subsumed by Philo under the name Trachonitis, while St. Luke calls them Ituraea and Trachonitis.⁶⁵ The region of Abilene at the foot of Lebanon was ruled by a certain Lysanias, who, as we know from an inscription discovered near the site of Abila, held the office of tetrarch under the Emperor Tiberius.⁶⁶ That Annas is mentioned as high priest beside his son-in-law Caiphas (18-36 A. D.)⁶⁷ is easily explained in view of the fact that the Jewish high priests, after relinquishing their office, usually clung to the title, together with some of the rights and duties of their former charge, and assisted the acting high priest in governing the Sanhedrin.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., pp. 431 sqq. A tetrarch originally was the governor of the fourth part of a province. The word gradually broadened and came to be applied to subordinate administrators inferior to kings and ethnarchs (chiefs of various nations), but enjoying some of the prerogatives of royalty. Cfr. Fillion, *Life of Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 131 sq.

⁶⁵ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 425 sqq.

⁶⁶ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 718 sqq.

⁶⁷ John XVIII, 13.

⁶⁸ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 4th ed., pp. 270 sq., 274 sq. The Sanhedrin (Gr. *συνέδριον* = a place where one sits, then, by extension, an assembly) was a sort of senate or superior national assembly with jurisdiction in religious matters over the whole

Archelaus, whom St. Matthew ⁶⁹ mentions as "reigning in Judea in the room of Herod his father," was the elder brother of Herod Antipas. He governed the province of Judea from 4 B. C. until 6 A. D.⁷⁰ After him begins the period of the Roman domination and the country is governed by procurators (6-41 A. D.), of whom Pontius Pilate was the fifth.⁷¹ The Herod in whose reign Christ was born,⁷² is King Herod the Great, who ruled over the whole of Palestine from 37 to 4 B. C.⁷³

St. Paul in his second Epistle to the Corinthians ⁷⁴ mentions a "governor" as ruling Damascus "under Aretas the king." This king is Aretas IV of Arabia, who reigned from 9 to 40 A. D.⁷⁵

Jewish world. Its jurisdiction was quite extensive, even under the Roman régime. Cfr. Fillion, *Life of Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 140 sq.

⁶⁹ Matt. II, 22.

⁷⁰ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 5th ed., pp. 449 sqq.; Fillion, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 131 sqq.

⁷¹ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 453, 487; Müller, *Pontius Pilatus, der fünfte Prokurator von Judäa*, Stuttgart, 1888.

⁷² Matt. II, 1.

⁷³ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 360 sqq. This implies, of course, that the beginning of the Christian era has been set at least four years too late. Cfr. Fillion, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 127 sqq.

⁷⁴ 2 Cor. XI, 32.

⁷⁵ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 737; cfr. C. M. Cobern, *The New Archeological Discoveries and Their Bearing upon the New Testament*, New York, 1917, p. 369.

St. Luke ⁷⁶ speaks of a procurator named Felix, who came with his wife Drusilla to hear Paul preach. Felix (52-60), after Herod Agrippa I ⁷⁷ had united all Palestine under his scepter, was one of the governors who ruled the different provinces in his name.⁷⁸ The successor of Felix, Portius Festus (60-62),⁷⁹ who sent St. Paul as a prisoner to Rome,⁸⁰ was a friend of Agrippa II (50-100), who, as son of Agrippa I, had been indemnified for the loss of his paternal inheritance by the emperors Claudius and Nero by the gift of another country. Portius Festus introduced St. Paul to King Agrippa on the occasion of a visit.⁸¹

B) *The Social Conditions of Palestine at the Time of Christ.*—The Evangelists are familiar with the Pharisees and Sadducees, the two most influential parties or sects among the Jews.

⁷⁶ Acts XXIV, 24.

⁷⁷ 41-44 A. D. Cfr. Acts XII, 1, 19-23; Fillion, *Life of Christ*, Vol. I, p. 137. On Herod's sons in general, see F. de Saulcy, *Histoire d'Hérode, Roi des Juifs*, Paris, 1867.

⁷⁸ A. D. 44-66. Cfr. Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 571, 577, 585 sqq.

⁷⁹ Cfr. Acts XXIV, 27.

⁸⁰ Acts XXV, 26; XXVII, 1 sq. Cfr. Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 579 sq.

⁸¹ Acts XXV, 13 sqq., 26. Cfr. Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 587, 591.

They expressly refer to the bigotry and hypocrisy of the former and the heretical views and Epicurean life of the latter.⁸² Intimately associated with these parties are the Scribes, who are so often mentioned as representatives of law and order in the Gospels.⁸³ On account of their occupation they were closely allied with the Pharisees. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus tells about these parties, and his description of them tallies perfectly with that given by the Evangelists.⁸⁴

The Gospels relate that the Jews hated the Romans⁸⁵ and quarrelled among themselves as to the licitness of paying tribute to Cæsar;⁸⁶ they also tell us that the Messiah was quite generally expected to be a worldly ruler.⁸⁷ This, too, agrees with what we know from Josephus.⁸⁸ The dislike of the Jews for the Samaritans is another

⁸² Matt. XXII, 23, 34; Mark VII, 8 sqq.; Luke XI, 42 sqq. On the Pharisees and Sadducees see Fillion, *Life of Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 187 sqq., 190 sqq.

⁸³ Mark II, 16; Luke V, 30; Acts XXIII, 9; Fillion, *Life of Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 176 sqq.

⁸⁴ Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. II, 4th ed., pp. 447-489; 372-389.

⁸⁵ Cfr. John XI, 48.

⁸⁶ Matt. XXII, 15 sqq.

⁸⁷ John VI, 14 sq.; cfr. Acts I, 6.

⁸⁸ *De Bello Iud.*, II, 8, 1; VI, 5, 4; VII, 8, 1.

matter regarding which Josephus confirms the Gospel narrative.⁸⁹

C) *The Life of Christ and the Beginnings of Christianity*.—The extra-Biblical parallels to the Scripture texts on the life of Christ and the beginnings of Christianity are more important than those we have quoted because of the greater importance of the subjects with which they deal. The life and teaching of the Redeemer were facts towards which every one was compelled to take an attitude, either pro or con. The reports of the profane writers, no matter how meagre and one-sided they appear in comparison with the New Testament record, will always be more willingly accepted by those who assume a hostile attitude towards supernatural revelation. This attitude, of course, is objectively wrong; for a witness who, like most of the authors of the New Testament books, suffers martyrdom and death for the truth of the facts alleged by him, is certainly more reliable and trustworthy than one who has nothing to fear from the consequences of his writing. Nevertheless, it is necessary to reckon with this attitude in order to convince those who prefer

⁸⁹ John IV, 9; cfr. Josephus, *op. cit.*, II, 12, 3; *Antiq.*, XVIII, 2, 12; XX, 6, 1.

extra-Biblical testimony to that of the canonical Scriptures.

Unfortunately for these sceptics, the profane testimonies bearing on the life of Christ and the beginnings of Christianity are few and meagre. This is not to be wondered at, since Christ spent the greater part of His life as a poor artisan in a secluded corner of Palestine, which lay outside the beaten track. His public appearance did create quite a stir among the Jews, but the excitement lasted only a short time and ended in His ignominious execution. On account of its purely local character, the Life of Jesus did not come under the notice of the Roman and Greek writers of the period. The Jewish historians did not deem it worth while to register the new religion because they regarded its Founder as a revolutionist and a false prophet, who justly suffered the death penalty for His crimes. Nor were the miracles wrought by Our Lord able to attract wide-spread attention, since belief in miracles was universal at that time and the worshippers of Æsculapius and Serapis pointed to similar phenomena.

Even after Christianity had spread beyond the limits of the Holy Land and penetrated to Rome and Greece, its true importance was not recognized for a long time. Since the new relig-

ion came from Palestine, it was regarded as a Jewish sect or put on a level with Judaism itself, which was thoroughly despised. Cicero, among others, called it a "*barbara superstitio*."⁹⁰ What confirmed this impression was that Christianity at first recruited its followers almost exclusively from among the poorer classes and, consequently, remained long unnoticed in an empire in which innumerable religious sects existed side by side.

a) *Pagan Testimonies*. The oldest pagan reference to Christianity is contained in a letter written by GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, Pliny the Younger, from Bythinia to his master, the Emperor Trajan. Pliny was a lawyer, a financier, an accomplished man of letters, and an intimate friend of Trajan. The Christians at that time (about 111-113) were regarded as brigands and disturbers of the peace, obstinate sectaries who deliberately opposed the unifying policy of the State. The principal passages of the letter in question are as follows: "They [certain persons who had been accused before Pliny's tribunal of being Christians] declared, however, that this had been the sum-total of their delinquencies or their delusion, that they had been wont to come together on a fixed day before dawn and

⁹⁰ *Pro Flacco*, 28.

sing a hymn alternately to Christ as a god, and to bind themselves by a solemn obligation, not for any guilty purpose, not to commit theft or robbery or adultery, nor to break faith or repudiate a deposit when called upon to pay it. That done, their habit had been to disperse and meet again to take food, but of the customary and harmless kind . . . But I discovered nothing but a degraded and extravagant superstition, and, therefore, adjourning the inquiry, I have had recourse to your advice, for the matter seemed to me a proper subject for consultation, especially on account of the number of persons endangered. For many persons of all ages, of every class, as well as of both sexes, are being, and will be, called into danger of their lives. Nor is it in the cities only, but the villages and the country also, throughout which the infection of this superstition has spread; yet it seems possible for it to be checked and amended.”⁹¹

⁹¹ Ep., l. x, 96 (al. 97): “*Adfirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpae suae vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum adpellati abnegarent. Quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium; . . . Nihil aliud inveni quam superstitionem pravam, immodicam: ideoque dilata cognitione ad consulendum te decucurri. Visa est enim mihi res digna consultatione,*

Somewhat later, about the year 116 A.D., MARCUS CORNELIUS TACITUS, the famous historian, published his *Annales*. In the fifteenth book, where he records the burning of Rome, which was attributed to the Emperor Nero, he speaks of Christ and His adherents as follows: "So, to dispel the report, Nero substituted as

maxime propter periclitantium numerum. Multi enim omnis aetatis, omnis ordinis, utriusque sexus etiam, vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur. Neque civitates tantum, sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est; quae videtur sisti et corrigi posse."—The reply of the Emperor was, under the circumstances, explicit and reasonable. "You have adopted the proper course, my dear Pliny, in examining into the cases of those who have been denounced to you as Christians, for no hard and fast rule can be laid down to meet a question of such wide extent. The Christians are not to be hunted out; if they are brought before you and the offense is proved, they are to be punished, but with this reservation,—that if anyone denies that he is a Christian and, by offering prayers to our deities, makes it clear that he is not, then he is to be pardoned because of his recantation, however suspicious his past conduct may have been. But pamphlets published anonymously must not carry any weight whatever, no matter what the charge may be; for they are not only a precedent of the very worst type, but they are not in consonance with the spirit of our age." These two letters are quoted in summary by Tertullian (cfr. Eusebius, *H. E.*, III, 33), so that, although they formed part of the imperial archives, they must have been made public by that time. In view of their obvious interest and importance they have attracted the critical attention of almost every historian of the period. A thick cloud of speculation, controversy, and varied interpretation has gathered round them; almost every syllable has been microscopically examined, but their authenticity is no longer disputed. (See A. L. Maycock in the *Catholic World*, Jan., 1928, Vol. CXXVI, No. 754, pp. 441 sqq.)

the guilty persons, and inflicted unheard of punishments on those who, detested for their abominable crimes, were vulgarly called Christians. The source of the name was Christus, who in the reign of Tiberius had been put to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate. Checked for a moment, the pernicious superstition broke out again, not only throughout Judea, the original home of that pest, but also through Rome, to which from all quarters everything outrageous and shameful finds its way and becomes vogue. So those who confessed were first hurried to trial, and then, on their showing, an immense number were involved in the same fate, not so much on the charge of incendiarism, as from hatred of the human race. And their death was aggravated with mockeries, insomuch that, wrapped in the hides of wild beasts, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or fastened to crosses to be set on fire, that when darkness fell, they might be burned to illuminate the night. Nero had offered his own gardens for the spectacle, and exhibited a circus show, mingling with the crowd himself dressed as a charioteer, or riding in a chariot. Whence it came about that, though the victims were guilty and deserved the most exemplary punishment, a sense of pity was aroused by the feeling that they were sacrificed

not on the altar of public interest, but to satisfy the cruelty of one man.”⁹²

A. Drews has tried to cast doubt upon the authenticity of this passage.⁹³ But if the text of the *Annales* had really been interpolated by Christian forgers, as he contends, the description of the Christian religion would surely have been different from what it is. “The passage,” says H. von Soden, “in its inimitable Tacitean style, and with its sovereign contempt for popular movements, cannot possibly be a Christian inter-

⁹² *Annales*, l. XV, c. 44 (for A.D. 64, written about 115): “*Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos et quæsitissimis poenis affectit, quos per flagitia inuisos vulgus Chrestianos appellabat. Auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat; repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursum erumpebat, non modo per Iudæam, originem eius mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocita aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque. Igitur primum correpti, qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens, haud proinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti sunt. Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis coniecti leniati canum interirent aut crucibus affixi aut flammati atque, ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur. Hortos suos ei spectaculo Nero obtulerat et circense ludicrum edebat, habitu aurigæ permixtus plebi vel curriculo insistens. Unde quamquam adversus fontes et novissima exempla meritos miseratio oriebatur, tamquam non utilitate publica, sed in sævitiam unius absumerentur.*” C. R. Haines, *Heathen Contact with Christianity During its First Century and a Half*, Cambridge, 1923, pp. 48 sq.; J. B. Aufhäuser, *Antike Jesus-Zeugnisse*, 2nd ed., Bonn, 1925, p. 20.

⁹³ *Die Christusmythe*, 2nd ed., Jena, 1910, p. 175. For a detailed refutation of Drews see Oscar Graber, *Im Kampfe um Christus*, Graz, 1927.

polation. If Christians were responsible for it, they would assuredly have painted the nascent Christian religion in a more favorable light, as they invariably did when they inserted the history of the origin of Christianity into historical works read among them. Tacitus was not read by the Christians at all on account of his heavy style and his general attitude, so that, according to the unanimous opinion of scholars, the text of his writings has come down to us in a more authentic form than that of any other pagan author.”⁹⁴ Another important consideration is that the original text of the *Annales* had “*Chrestianos*,” not “*Christianos*,” whereas the name of the Founder is given as “*Christus*,” not “*Chrestus*.” The Christians were popularly known as “*Chrestiani*,” but Tacitus, who had investigated their history, while retaining this erroneous form, quietly corrected the name of the Founder.⁹⁵

Another pagan testimony is that of GAIUS SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS, who held the office of tribune under Trajan (98–117) and that of secretary of the war cabinet under Hadrian (117–138). He writes in his biography of the

⁹⁴ H. von Soden, *Hat Jesus gelebt?* Berlin, 1910, p. 11.

⁹⁵ A. von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Vol. I, 4th ed., Leipsic, 1923, pp. 427 sq.

Emperor Claudius (composed about 120): "For constant riots instigated by Chrestus he [Claudius] expelled the Jews from Rome."⁹⁶ "Chrestus" was the vulgar form of "Christus." Tertullian⁹⁷ and Lactantius⁹⁸ reproach the pagan Romans for calling the Christians "Chrestiani" and their Founder "Chrestus." That Suetonius should mention Christ as leader of the Jews is not surprising, since he draws no clear distinction between Jews and Christians, and in another passage of his books classes both the latter and the former as "*similia sectantes*."⁹⁹ The riots instigated by the Jews (and Christians) need not necessarily be interpreted as revolutionary. Most likely they were local disturbances occasioned by the conversion of pagans to Christianity. That Christ, who no longer dwelled visibly among His adherents, was represented as the instigator of these disturbances, was probably owing to the fact that the Christians themselves, in order not to betray the visible heads of the Church, designated Christ, whose name they bore, as the leader of their community.

⁹⁶ *De Vita Caesarum*, Claudius, c. 25, 3: "*Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit*." Cfr. Acts XVIII, 2.

⁹⁷ *Apol.*, 3 (Migne, P. L., I, 281).

⁹⁸ *Div. Institut.*, IV, 7 (P. L., VI, 464).

⁹⁹ *De Vita Caesarum*, Tiberius, c. 36.

In his life of Nero, describing the measures taken by that emperor against the Christians because of the burning of the city, Suetonius says that "the Christians, a race of men addicted to a new and pestilent superstition, were severely dealt with."¹

Though the statements of Suetonius concerning the Christians are meagre, they prove this much at least, that the Christian religion had already taken root in Rome at the time of Nero and Claudius.

b) *Jewish Testimonies*.—The most ancient and complete reference to Christ in profane literature, which is, however, of contested authenticity, is contained in the *Antiquities of the Jewish Nation* by FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS (d. 100 A. D.). The Greek text reads as follows: "Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς, σοφὸς ἀνὴρ, εἴ γε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή. Ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τάληθῇ δεχομένων καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο. Ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. Καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον αὐτὸν ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ

¹ Nero, c. 16, 2: "*Afflicti suppliciiis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae.*" Cfr. the critical discussion of the passages referring to Christ in the writings of the pagans in K. Linck, *De Antiquissimis Veterum quae ad Iesum spectant Testimoniis*, Giessen, 1913, with abundant bibliographical references.

αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία θαυμάσια περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκότων. Εἰσέτι τὸ νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὀνομασμένων οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φύλον.” (*Antiqu.*, XVIII, 3, 3).

Réville, in his *Jesus of Nazareth*, reconstructs the passage as follows:

“At that time appeared Jesus, a wise man, who did astonishing things. That is why a goodly number of Jews and also of Greeks attached themselves to him. [Then follow some sentences probably signifying that these adherents had committed the error of proclaiming him the Christ.] But denounced by the leading men of the nation, this Jesus was compelled to die upon the cross. But those who had loved him before persevered in their sentiment, and to-day there still exists a class of people who take from him the name of Christians.”²

² Some writers regard the testimony of Josephus as unquestionably genuine, whereas others reject it as spurious. The chief defenders of the authenticity of the passage of late years have been: F. Kaulen (*Flavius Josephus' Jüdische Altertümer*, 3rd ed., 1892, p. 620); H. Hurter, S.J. (*Zeitschrift für kath. Theologie*, 1890, pp. 515 sqq.; 1896, 584 sqq.); F. Bole (*Flavius Josephus über Christus und die Christen*, Brixen, 1896); F. A. Kneller, S.J. (*Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, Vol. LIII, 1897, pp. 1-19; 161-174); F. C. Burkitt (*Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1913, pp. 135-144); A. von Harnack (*Internationale Wochenschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik*, 1913, pp. 1037-1068). The authenticity of the passage has been impugned by G. Wandel (*Neue kirchl. Zeitschrift*, 1891, pp. 967-987); B. Niese (*De Testimonio Christiano*

This passage is well attested externally, since it appears in all existing MSS. of the eighteenth book of the *Antiquities*, the oldest of which dates from the eleventh century.³ The passage occurs also in a Greek synopsis of the *Antiquities* made in the ninth or tenth century, and in a Latin translation of the sixth century, for which Casiodorus was responsible.⁴ To the testimony of the MSS. may be added that of the ancient writers who quote Josephus's account of Christ. The oldest of these indirect witnesses is Eusebius.⁵ Both St. Jerome and the author of the *De Excidio Urbis Hierosolymitanae*⁶ assert that in the

quod est apud Iosephum, Marburg, 1893); E. Schürer (*Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. I, 5th ed., Leipsic, 1920, pp. 544-549; with a bibliography of the older literature on the subject); M. J. Lagrange (*Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, Paris, 1908, p. 19); P. Batiffol (*Orpheus et l'Évangile*, Paris, 1910, pp. 3-21); K. Linck (*De Antiquissimis Veterum quae ad Iesum Nazarenum spectant Testimoniis*, Giessen, 1913, pp. 1-31). The following writers regard the text as interpolated: A. von Gutschmid (*Kleine Schriften*, Vol. IV, Leipsic, 1893, pp. 352-354); G. A. Müller, *Christus bei Josephus Flavius*, 2nd ed., Innsbruck, 1895); F. Asmussen (*Deutsch-evangel. Blätter*, 1896, pp. 183-191); S. Reinach (*Revue des Études Juives*, Vol. XXXV, 1897, pp. 1-18); H. Felder (*Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift*, Linz, 1914, pp. 608-620; with a bibliography of the more recent literature on the subject).

³ B. Niese, *Fl. Iosephi Opera*, Berlin, 1885-1895, Vol. III, Praef.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, I, xviii sq., xxvii sq. XVIII sq., XXVII sq.

⁵ *H. E.*, I, 11 (Migne, *P.G.*, XX, 216 sq.); *Demonstr. Evang.*, III, 5 (*P.G.*, XXII, 221).

⁶ Cfr. Eusebius, *H. E.*, II, 12.

eighteenth book of his *Antiquities* Josephus expressly acknowledges that Christ was slain by the Pharisees on account of His miracles.⁷ Under these circumstances we cannot but assent to the judgment of Kneller: "One thing is certain, namely, that the passage concerning Christ [in the *Antiquities* of Josephus] is as well attested by tradition as any other in the writings of that author."⁸

Those who deny the authenticity of the passage do so for external as well as internal reasons. Their first argument is that, according to Origen,⁹ Josephus did not admit Jesus to be the Christ. Origen would probably not have used the expression ἀπιστῶν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ὡς χριστῷ if his copy of Josephus had contained the words: ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. But if, as some think, his knowledge of Josephus was only superficial, and if he had read that author's writings either not at all or only in a cursory manner, or if the conviction of Josephus's unbelief was general at the time when Origen wrote, his way of expressing himself cannot surprise us.

It is further claimed that the passage in ques-

⁷ Cfr. Haines, *Heathen Contact with Christianity during its First Century and a Half*, Cambridge, 1923, pp. 107 sq.

⁸ *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, Vol. LIII, p. 7.

⁹ *Contra Celsum*, I, 47 (P.G., XI, 745.)

tion cannot be genuine for the reason that, if it were, it would certainly have been quoted by the early Christian apologists, who had to defend the Messianic character of Jesus against the Jews. In reply to this objection we would call attention to the fact that Josephus had allied himself with the Romans and was not favorably regarded by his fellow-Jews, and consequently his authority would not be rated very highly among them. This is probably the reason why such eminent defenders of the Christian religion as St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom, who wrote after Eusebius, do not quote Josephus's testimony in favor of Christ.

An internal criterion for rejecting the authenticity of the Josephan text is said to be the fact that it does not square with, but actually disturbs, the context. The passage concerning Christ is followed by this sentence: "At about the same time the Jews were affected by another accident." As there is nothing in the passage concerning Christ which indicates an accident, but accidents are mentioned in the preceding text, the context becomes more intelligible if the passage is omitted. For this reason the text is rejected as a later interpolation. But we have no right to expect a closely knit context in the *Jewish Antiquities*. The entire text surrounding

the passage under discussion is very loosely constructed. If it were more closely woven, the account of the preceding accident would have had to be immediately followed by mention of another, which is not the case, since the author goes on to narrate an event that took place in Rome and has no connection whatever with the accident in question.

Another objection raised against the genuineness of Josephus's account of Christ is derived from the fact that this passage, in contradistinction to the author's usual method, contains little more than encomiums, and says nothing about the birth-place of Jesus, His descent, His activities, and the cause of His death. To this we reply that Josephus treats other historic characters, *e. g.*, John the Baptist and Theodas,¹⁰ in the same way and, secondly, that a detailed life of Christ would have given rise to the same objection, namely, that the text was interpolated.

Some critics take offence at the fact that Josephus does not explain the short sentence, "But this man was the Christ." Since nothing was said in the previous context about Christ, they argue, Josephus, writing for pagans who knew nothing of the Jewish expectation of a Messiah, should have given some indication of what he

¹⁰ Cfr. Acts V, 36.

thought of the personality of Christ. However, this demand would be justified only if it could be shown that Josephus in the sentence quoted intended to express his belief that Jesus was the expected Messiah, which, as we shall see directly, was probably not his purpose.

The most important intrinsic argument against the authenticity of the text with which we are concerned is drawn from that same little sentence: ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. Only a Christian could have expressed himself thus, says Schürer; but Josephus was no Christian, and consequently cannot have written this sentence.¹¹ The answer to this objection is that there is no reason for asserting that only a Christian could have written: "But this man was the Christ." Josephus, though not a Christian, may well have penned these words, in fact, it seems probable that he did so in view of his character and the circumstances under which he wrote. Selfishness is his most outstanding quality. "He is not a Jew, nor a pagan, nor yet a friend of the Christians, but an unprincipled and ambitious adventurer who reckons with the powers that be. Origen is entirely right in holding that Josephus was far from believing in or accepting the Messiah in the

¹¹ Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. I, 5th ed., p. 547.

Christian sense. As his whole character was ambiguous, so, too, were his utterances, dictated by a desire to be always on the safe side."¹² Hence, he chose his words in such wise that whoever read them could interpret them according to his own preference. A pagan might think of the Christ who was well known as the founder of a new religion; a Christian might find his own belief in the Messianic mission of Jesus expressed in the text; a Jew might detect therein a sufficiently clear intimation that Christ was the man who had proclaimed himself the Messiah and was executed by the rulers of the people.

Another brief mention of Christ is found in chapter XX of the *Antiquities*, where Josephus reports the death of the Apostle Andrew, to whom he refers as "the brother of Jesus, who is called the Christ."¹³ This passage, too, for much the same reasons, is accepted as authentic by some and rejected by other critics.

A great stir was created in English university circles and even in the daily press in 1927 by what is known as the "*Russian Josephus*," i. e., an ancient Slavic version of the Aramaic original of the Jewish War, which contains lengthy ref-

¹² A. Seitz, *Christus-Zeugnisse*, Köln, 1906, p. 15.

¹³ τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου χριστοῦ. *Ant.*, XX, 9, 1. The whole passage in Haines, *op. cit.*, p. 109 and Aufhauser, *Antike Christus-Zeugnisse*, 2nd ed., pp. 13 sq.

erences to John the Baptist, to our Blessed Lord, and to early Christianity. As a matter of fact these passages had been published in a German translation by W. Berendts as far back as 1906, but had been repudiated as not genuine by the leaders of critical thought, with the exception of two Catholic scholars, H. Delehaye, S. J., of the Bollandists, and A. Goethals.¹⁴ The sudden revival of interest in the passages arose from the publication of Berendts' translation in the *Acts and Commentaries* of the University of Dorpat, and especially from the efforts of Professor Robert Eisler, a Jewish scholar, who contends that the Russian is indeed a translation of the Aramaic of Josephus and that the passages refer-

¹⁴ The passage concerning Christ in the ancient Slavic translation of the Aramaic original of the *Jewish War* (Bk. II, ch. ix, between 4 and 5) is as follows: "At that time also a man rose, if it be right to call him a man, his nature and form were indeed human, but his appearance more than human, his works indeed were divine, he worked miracles astounding and mighty. Hence it is impossible for me to call him a man. But again, having regard to things in general, I would not call him an angel either. And all he worked through some invisible power, he worked by word and command. Some said of him that he was our first lawgiver, risen from the dead and [that he] showed forth many healings and achievements. But others thought that he was sent by God. But he went counter in many things to the law, and he did not keep the Sabbath according to the custom of the fathers. However, on the other hand, he committed nothing shameful, nor a crime, but by word he achieved all things. And many of the people followed him and accepted his teachings. And many souls became

ring to the Baptist, Christ, and the Apostles are unsettled, thinking that thereby the Jewish tribes would free themselves from Roman hands. Now it was his custom to stay mostly on Mount Olivet before the city. There also he granted the healings to the people. And one hundred and forty disciples gathered round him and a multitude of the people. When, however, they saw his power, that he carried out all he wished by word, they bade him make entrance into the city and cut down the Roman soldiers and Pilate and become king over them. But he refused it with contempt. And after this, when the Jewish leaders received an account of this, they gathered themselves together with the High Priest and said: 'We are powerless and weak to resist the Romans. But as the bow is bent, let us go and inform Pilate what we have heard, and we shall be out of harm's way, lest when he hears it from others, we be despoiled of our goods and even massacred, and our children scattered. And they went and told Pilate. And he sent and had many of the people cut down. And that miracle-worker he caused to be brought to him. And as he instituted an enquiry on this account, he saw that he [Jesus] was a doer of good and not a doer of evil, nor a rebel, nor one who strove for sovereignty, and he dismissed him. He had in fact healed his wife when dying. And he went to his accustomed place and did his accustomed works. And when again more people gathered round him, then he glorified himself by his working more than all. The teachers of the law were poisoned with envy and gave Pilate thirty talents that he should kill him, and after he had taken the money, he abandoned him to their will, that they themselves should carry out their purpose. And they took him and crucified him against the law of the fathers.'—Concerning John the Baptist (Bk. II, ch. vii, after 2, before the opening words of § 3): "In those days there walked amongst the Jews a man in strange garments, since he had glued the skins of oxen to his body, where it was not covered with his own hair. But in face he was like a savage. That one came to the Jews and called them to liberty, saying: 'God has sent me, that I should show you the way of the law, in which you will free yourselves from many tyrants, and no mortal will rule over you, only the Most High, who has sent me.' And when the people heard this, they were glad. And all

genuine, though retouched by a Christian hand.

Judea that lies around Jerusalem followed him. And he did nothing else to them but that he dipped them in the River Jordan and then dismissed them, exhorting them that they should cease from evil works and promising that there would be given unto them a Cæsar, who would deliver them and subject all things hostile to them, but they themselves would be subject to none. At these words some blasphemed, and others gained faith. And when he was brought before Archelaus, and the learned in the law were gathered together, they asked him who he was, and where he had dwelled hitherto. And he answered and said: 'I am guileless, as the Spirit of God has moved me, and I live on reeds and roots and wild fruit.' Now, as they threw themselves upon him to torture him, that he should desist from his preachings and doings, he spoke: 'It is you who should abandon your abominable doings and turn back to the Lord your God.' On this Simon, a Pharisee, formerly one of the Essenes, arose in great wrath and spoke: 'We read the divine books every day, but thou, who hast come out of the forests as a wild beast, thou darest to teach us and to deceive the people with thy reckless speech. And he leaped forward to do him bodily mischief. But John rebuked them saying: 'Unto you I will not reveal the mystery that dwelleth amongst you, for you would not. Hence there has come upon you an unspeakable evil and because of you it cometh.' And after he had thus spoken, he went to the country beyond the Jordan, and as no one dared to gainsay him, he did the works which he had done before." (Bk. II, ch. ix, paragraphs 5-6 of the Greek precede §§ 2-4): "And Herod, his brother, took Herodias, his wife. But on her account all learned in the law abominated him, but dared not rebuke him to his face. But now that man whom they called a savage, came to him in wrath and said: 'Why hast thou taken the wife of thy brother, thou reckless one! Since thy brother has died a merciless death, so thou also shalt be mowed down by the heavenly scythe. God's counsel will not be dumb, but will destroy thee through bitter evil in strange lands. For thou dost not raise seed to thy brother, but satisfiest thy fleshly lusts and committest adultery, as there are of him four children.' But when Herod heard this, he waxed wroth and commanded that he [John] should be beaten and

The Silence of Philo Judaeus.—Philo of Alex-

driven away. But he [John] rebuked Herod wherever he found him, and this so long till he [Herod] applied force and commanded that he [John] should be cut down. But his character was strange and his kind of life not human, indeed as a disembodied ghost, so he persevered. His lips knew no bread, not even at the Passover did he eat unleavened bread, saying: 'Such bread is given in memory of God, who delivered the people from bondage, to comfort them as the way was mournful.' But wine and intoxicating drink he did not even allow near, and every animal [food] he abominated, and every wrong he rebuked, and for food he used twigs of trees." Concerning the Apostles (Bk. II, ch. ii, 6): "Claudius sent again his governors to those states, Cuspius Fadus and Tiberius Alexander, who both kept the people in peace, since they did not allow them in any point to deviate from the pure law. And as often as some one deflected from the law, it was denounced to the teachers of the law, and they sent him to the presence of the Emperor. And as at the time of those two [Fadus and Alexander] many had shown themselves as disciples of the above-named miracle-worker, and as they spoke to the people about their teacher, that he was alive though he had died, and that he would free you (*sic!*) from bondage, many of the people listened to the above-mentioned and accepted for themselves their command; not for the sake of honor, for indeed they were of the simple folk, some even shoemakers, others sandal-makers, others artisans. And what marvelous signs they worked, in truth, whatever they wished! But since those noble governors saw the seduction of the people, they planned with the scribes to lay hold on them and put them to death, for the insignificant is not insignificant when it matures into something great. But they felt ashamed and were terrified about the signs, as they said: In a normal way such miracles do not occur, but when they do not have their origin in God's council, they will swiftly be proved wrong. And they gave them [the disciples of Christ] leave to do as they would. Afterwards, however, being troubled by them, they [the Jewish leaders] sent them [the disciples] away, some to the emperors, others to Antioch, and others in far away countries to probe the matter. Claudius then removed both the governors and sent Cumanus." Concerning the temple inscription (Bk. V, ch. v, § 2 after "by

andria,¹⁵ usually called Philo Judaeus (the Jew), says that in the year 40 A. D., when advanced in age, he went to Rome as a member of a Jewish mission. Hence, he must have been born about 20 or 25 B. C. and was probably a young man when Mary and Joseph fled with

fourteen steps from the first court"): "And above those tablets with inscriptions [threatening death in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin against gentile intruders on the Temple precincts] hung a fourth tablet with an inscription in those [Hebrew] characters, stating: Jesus had not reigned as king, he was crucified by the Jews because he announced the destruction of the city and the desolation of the Temple."—For these and a few other passages from the "Russian Josephus," for which we have no room here, see J. P. Arendzen, *Men and Manners in the Days of Christ*, London, 1928, pp. 57 sqq. This learned scholar thinks that "there can hardly be a reasonable doubt that the Russian text is a translation of Josephus's first edition of the *Jewish War* . . . directly after the Aramaic original, and not through the intermediacy of a Greek version," and that "there is nothing to suggest that the passages referring to the Baptist, Christ, and the Apostles are insertions by another hand." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 67 sq.) Berendts' work, mentioned above, is entitled, *Die Zeugnisse vom Christentum im Slavischen "De Bello Judaico" des Josephus*, 1906. For another German edition of the passages referring to John the Baptist, Christ, and the Apostles, see Klostermann, *Apocrypha*, Vol. III, 11, 1911; and for a rendering into English of all the passages, Mead, *The Gnostic John the Baptizer*, London, 1924, pp. 103 sqq. For a discussion of the authenticity of the "Russian Josephus" see Vacher Burch, *Jesus Christ and His Revelation: Fresh Evidence from Christian Sources and Josephus*, London, 1927, pp. 142-177.

¹⁵ Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. III, 4th ed., pp. 636 sqq.; J. P. Arendzen, *Men and Manners in the Days of Christ*, London, 1928, pp. 189-221; E. Bréhier in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII, pp. 23 sqq.; Jas. Drummond, *Philo Judaeus*, 2 vols., London, 1888.

their Child to Egypt.¹⁶ Since he wrote copiously on the contemporary history of the Jews and, as Eusebius tells us,¹⁷ refers to Pontius Pilate, it appears strange that he nowhere mentions Jesus. Philo's silence on this head can hardly be attributed to ignorance, since, with the communications that existed at that time between Jerusalem and the Jews of Alexandria, it is not probable that the news of the public activity of Christ had not reached the latter city during the lifetime of the famous Jewish author and philosopher.¹⁸ But even on the assumption that Philo knew of the life and teaching of Christ, his silence can be explained. We have only to think of the Messianic idea existing in the Jewish mind at that time. The Jews expected a Messiah who was to be a political ruler after the example of David and to free his nation from the Roman yoke. In this respect Philo, who, in spite of his Hellenistic training and philosophical views, always remained faithful to the traditional beliefs of the Jewish nation, was a true child of his time, and no doubt regarded a man who claimed to be the promised Messiah, yet confined his activity

¹⁶ Arendzen, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

¹⁷ *H. E.*, II, 5 (*Migne, P.G.*, XX, 149).

¹⁸ F. Meffert, *Die geschichtliche Existenz Christi*, 8th ed., M. Gladbach, 1910, p. 37.

exclusively to the religious sphere, as an impostor whose claims had best be ignored.¹⁹

Should the testimony of Josephus Flavius be certainly shown to be spurious, his silence with regard to Christ could no doubt be explained on similar grounds. Josephus wrote for pagan Romans with the object of glorifying his own people.²⁰ With this purpose in view, he carefully omitted whatever could throw an unfavorable light on the Jews. Their expectation of a Messias, which had repeatedly led to revolts and formed a constant source of danger to the Roman rule, he would, therefore, naturally pass over in silence. As he could not mention Jesus without some intimation of His Messianic claims, the only safe course was to say nothing at all about Him.

The Testimony of the Talmud.—The writers whose testimony we have quoted, while more or less adverse to the Christian religion, did not deem it their duty to combat that religion directly in their writings. It was otherwise with the Talmudists. They were bitter enemies of Christianity, who did not hesitate to employ calumny and slander in their efforts to discredit

¹⁹ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 601 sqq.; F. Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, 2 vols., London, 1915.

²⁰ Schürer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 94.

Jesus and His teaching. But in spite of the distortions of which they were guilty, their testimony is not without importance, for it confirms the existence of Jesus and offers a parallel account of the leading features of His career, which account, though disfigured, is not without historical value.

The most ancient portion of the Talmud, called *Mishna*, which was composed towards the end of the second century, is merely a codification of Jewish laws. It contains no reference to Jesus. The first mention of our Divine Saviour is found in the *Tosephta*, a supplement to the *Mishna*, composed about the beginning of the third century. More information is contained in an explanation of the *Mishna* found in the Palestinian Talmud (fourth century), and still more in the Babylonian Talmud, which dates from the fifth or sixth century.

The *Tosephta*, which reproduces an ancient Jewish tradition that had already been exploited by Celsus,²¹ says that Jesus—whom it never mentions by name except perhaps once or twice—was the adulterine issue of Mirjam (Mary) and a soldier named Pandera,²² and is therefore

²¹ Cfr. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I, 32 (Migne, *P.G.*, XI, 720 sq.)

²² The name Pandera is not, as was formerly thought, derived from *παρθένος* (virgin; cfr. J. Rendel Harris in the *Ex-*

called Jeshu ben Pandira (or Pantiri). He became an adept in the arts of magic in Egypt, but was hanged on the eve of the Pasch at Lydda, because he seduced the Jews to idolatry and sorcery.²³

This brief *curriculum vitae* was expanded in the notorious *Sepher Toledoth Yeshu* (The Generations [*i. e.*, History] of Jesus), which made its first appearance in the ninth century and

positor, London, 5th series, II, 193) nor from Egyptian mythology, but was a common name among the ancients. Cfr. A. Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 3rd ed., Tübingen, 1909, p. 46.

²³ The *Jewish Encyclopedia* tabulates the places where Christ is mentioned in the Talmud and says that it is a mere "subterfuge" to attempt to escape these references as if they did not apply to Jesus of Nazareth. This great Jewish reference work freely admits that the Talmud specifies Christ's healing the halt, blind, and leprous, and mentions His walking on the sea. Laible, *Christus im Talmud* (Engl. tr., 1893), gives a full list of references to the Virgin Mary. Cfr. C. M. Cobern, *The New Archeological Discoveries and their Bearing upon the New Testament*, 2nd ed., New York, 1917, pp. 624 sqq. The Talmud, as Dr. Cobern points out, is a mammoth work, much larger than the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. A fine edition in fifteen volumes, with variants, has been published by Rabbinovicz; a critical German translation by Goldschmidt; an English version with a good introduction and a short "History of the Talmud" by M. L. Rodkinson (20 volumes). Rodkinson does not translate the passages referring to Christ in the Talmud, but acknowledges their existence (XIX, 106; cfr. Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 631). For more complete details see R. T. Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, London, 1904; the article "Christ in Jewish Literature" by the same author in Hastings's *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Vol. II, 876-878; W. Bauer, *Das Leben Jesu im Zeitalter der neutestamentlichen Apokryphen*, pp. 452-486.

created some stir during and after the Middle Ages. It has been republished of late by Samuel Krauss, a German Jew.²⁴ Fillion justly characterizes this production as follows: "This ignoble pamphlet, by a development of the Talmudic calumnies, treats of the birth of Christ, His public life, His death, and the origin of the Christian Church. The details would be ridiculous if they were not so revolting."²⁵

In connection with this abominable production we must mention a modern forgery, known as the Benan Letter.

The Benan Letter.—Benan, who is described as an Egyptian physician and a contemporary and boyhood friend of Jesus, is said to have written a letter about him to a certain Straton, a former secretary of the Emperor Tibe-

²⁴ There are two widely different recensions of the *Toledoth Yeshu*. J. C. Wagenseil published a Latin translation of one in his *Tela Ignea Satanae* (Altdorf, 1681), and J. J. Huldreich of the other in his *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni a Judaeis blaspheme corrupta* (Leyden, 1705). Cfr. the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. XII, p. 462; S. Baring-Gould, *The Lost and Hostile Gospels*, London, 1884, pp. 76-115; A. Seitz, *Christus-Zeugnisse*, Cologne, 1906, pp. 31 sqq.; J. Diefenbach, *Christus und Christentum*, Mayence, 1877, pp. 36 sqq. A number of Talmudic passages concerning Christ will be found in Aufhauser, *Antike Christus-Zeugnisse*, 2nd ed., Bonn, 1925, pp. 44-57.

²⁵ L. C. Fillion, *Life of Christ*, tr. by N. Thompson, Vol. I, pp. 9-10. Cfr. Homily of St. John Damascene on Matth. I, 1-16 in the *Brev. Rom.*, Office of St. Joachim, Aug. 16th, lectio VIII.

rius. The alleged text of this letter was first printed in a book published by Ernest Edler von Planitz at Berlin, Germany, in 1911, under the title, *Ein Jugendfreund Jesu: Brief des aegyptischen Arztes Benan aus der Zeit Domitians. Nach dem griechischen Urtext und der späteren koptischen Uebearbeitung*. The author followed the pretended text with two volumes of commentary and a final volume bearing the title, *Jesus und sein Werk im Lichte des Benan-briefes*.

Benan tells his friend Straton of the star seen by the Magi at the birth of Jesus, whom he calls Jehoshua of Anu-Heliopolis. An astronomer named Putiphra had been sent from Anu (Egypt) to the land of the Apriu (Hebrews) for the purpose of observing the stars. Just as he discovers Sirius, a boy is born in the place where he is staying. This boy—Jehoshua—is entrusted to the astronomer. Putiphra takes him to Anu, where Jehoshua is welcomed by the high priest of the God Ra and trained by a Jewish rabbi, Pinehas. At twelve he visits his parents and his brothers and sisters in Palestine. They take him up to the Temple, where he surprises the Scribes and Pharisees by his profound knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures. Jehoshua returns to Egypt, where he becomes the intimate friend of Benan, who is taking a course of medicine at Heliopolis. Jehoshua also studies medicine and soon acquires fame by his wonderful cures. He joins the Jewish sect of the Therapeutae, from whom he derives much additional knowledge and inspiration. At the age of twenty-six Jehoshua meets Philo of Alexandria, with whom he discusses philosophical and religious problems. Then, upon the advice of Pinehas, he returns to his home in Palestine, where he instructs the people in religion and cures those that apply to him for re-

lief from various diseases. His friends in Egypt, not hearing from him for three years, finally become worried, and Benan visits Jerusalem with another Egyptian doctor to make enquiries. They arrive in the Holy City on the day of the Crucifixion. On the morrow they go out to Mount Calvary, but find the crosses vacant. They seek Jehoshua's grave and, at the tomb, witness the miracle of the Resurrection. It is they who meet the pious women and are taken for angels because of their white garments. Jehoshua appears to them on the following day, whereupon they return to Anu-Heliopolis.

The second part of the letter gives an account of the events following the Resurrection. Benan removes to Italy shortly before the death of the Emperor Tiberius, becomes body physician to Caligula and Claudius, witnesses the burning of Rome under Nero, visits St. Paul in the Tullianum, where he also meets Seneca, sees the Christians martyred in the Vatican Circus, is compelled to fly, and returns once more to Jerusalem, where he enters into relations with the community of the Nazarenes, and makes the acquaintance of SS. Peter and John. Not long afterwards he meets the Roman general Titus in Cæsarea, is engaged by him as body-physician, and in that capacity witnesses the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. He participates in the triumph of Vespasian and Titus at Rome and among the Jewish prisoners on this occasion recognizes some Christians, among them the Apostle John, for whom, at the request of St. Luke, he intercedes with Titus. John is released and banished to Ephesus. After the death of Vespasian, Benan goes to Pompeii and witnesses the slaughter of the Christian martyrs in the amphitheatre and the fatal eruption of Vesuvius. He remains a heathen, but closes

his letter with a prediction of the triumph of Christianity over paganism.

Aside from the many incongruities of this narrative, it is most unlikely that a single individual should have been an eye-witness of practically all the important historical events of his time. C. Schmidt, who has subjected the alleged Benan Letter to a searching criticism, shows it to be a rank forgery. "Ignorance, impudent self-assurance, and maliciousness," he says, "have sponsored this production," and "Jesus of Anu is the creation of a romancer who has gathered his materials indiscriminately from modern sources and deceived his readers by his pseudo-scholarly descriptions of the age and country." ²⁶

§ IV. ATTACKS UPON THE AUTHENTICITY AND CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

Among the writings of antiquity none are so well attested as the four Gospels. The Christian Church has always believed in the Apostolic origin of these documents and found therein the surest guarantee of their historic trust-worthiness. The heretics, too, never doubted the genuineness of the Gospels, but appealed to them and took from them the arguments with which they tried to justify their own divergent views of Christian doctrine.

The first pagan writers to attack the reliability of the Gospels were Celsus and Lucian. Their

²⁶ C. Schmidt, *Der Benanbrief*, Leipsic, 1921, pp. 12, 76, 78.

example was followed later by Porphyry and the Emperor Julian in the fourth, and by the Talmudists in the fourth and fifth centuries.

The attack was renewed with fresh vigor by the Rationalists of the eighteenth century. Thus there arose in course of time a number of theories about the Gospels, denying either their authenticity or their credibility or both.

I. *The Theory that the Gospels are the Product of Fraud and Deception.*—This theory originated with HERMANN SAMUEL REIMARUS (d. 1768), portions of whose *Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* were edited by G. E. Lessing under the title *Wolfenbütteler Fragmente* (Braunschweig, 1774–1778). Reimarus asserts that Jesus originally intended to establish a political kingdom and to free the Jews from the Roman yoke, but this plan was frustrated by His enemies and Jesus Himself executed as a revolutionist. The Apostles were left alone after His death and, not desiring to return to their previous occupations, but eager to fulfil the mission which their Master had imposed on them, they attributed to Him the false motive of wanting to found a spiritual kingdom, and wrote the Gospels to prove this claim.

This arbitrary hypothesis, resting as it does upon an utterly one-sided interpretation and

arbitrary distortion of the facts, found so little favor that Semler, a fellow-Rationalist and contemporary of Reimarus, undertook to refute it. Pfleiderer calls the example of Reimarus characteristic of that want of historical sense and that lack of psychological understanding in religious questions displayed by the older Rationalist school.²⁷

2. The first attempt to explain the gospel story in a *purely natural* way was made by Professor HEINRICH EBERHARD GOTTLÖB PAULUS of Heidelberg (d. 1851). Paulus did not deny the truth of the Gospels, but maintained that what seems to us miraculous and supernatural in them can be traced to perfectly natural causes. The Evangelists, he said, on account of their ignorance of the powers of nature, sometimes failed to mention certain accompanying circumstances or mediate causes in reporting miracles. All that is necessary is to supply these missing links, and

²⁷ O. Pfleiderer, *Die Entstehung des Christentums*, 2nd ed., Munich, 1907, p. 4. On Reimarus and the "Wolfenbüttel Fragments" see C. Bertheau in the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. XII, pp. 402 f. There is an English translation of a part, *Fragments from Reimarus*, ed. by C. Voysey, London, 1879; cfr. J. Sawyer, *A Criticism of . . . C. Voysey's Fragments from Reimarus*, London, 1880; J. A. H. Reimari . . . de Vita sua Commentarius. Addita sunt de Vita H. S. Reimari Narrationes J. G. Büschii et C. A. Klotzii, Hamburg, 1815.

the seeming miracles forthwith appear in their true light as perfectly natural events. Jesus, according to Paulus, was not the Son of God, but a wise and virtuous philosopher, who wrought no miracles, but performed many extraordinary works of mercy and charity, for which he was qualified by his medical skill and in which He was aided by accident and good luck.²⁸

Criticism. The miracles of Christ cannot be explained naturally except by dint of arbitrary changes and a complete misinterpretation of the Gospels, and therefore the Rationalist critic DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS found it an easy thing to shatter Paulus' hypothesis soon after its publication.

3. Strauss substituted for the natural explanation of Paulus the theory that the supernatural events, and more especially the miracles recorded in the Gospels, were the product of a myth-forming process, which drew its materials from the Old Testament prophecies. The Evangelists simply attributed the traditional traits of the Messias to Jesus of Nazareth. Strauss arrived at this interpretation because he regarded

²⁸ On Paulus see P. Tschackert in the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. VIII, pp. 426 sq. Paulus was characterized by a colleague as "a man who thinks what he believes and believes what he thinks." He was refuted on the Catholic side by the famous exegete Hug.

miracles as impossible and did not relish the Rationalistic theories that had been devised to empty the Gospels of their supernatural content. In his opinion, myths are at the beginning of all religion, and the New Testament myth has its centre and point of support in the historic person of Jesus of Nazareth. Its sources are: "the expectation of the Messiah which existed among the Jews before and independently of Jesus," and "the peculiar impression which Jesus made by virtue of his personality, His works, and His fate, and by means of which He modified the Messianic idea of His people."²⁹

Strauss's myth theory is untenable for a three-fold reason.

a) It is based upon the assumption that miracles are impossible. It was because Strauss denied the possibility of miracles and was dissatisfied with the natural explanation of the phenomena recorded in the Gospels, that he represented all reports of miracles as myths. "There is," he says,

²⁹ D. F. Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, Vol. I, 13th ed., Tübingen, 1904, pp. 97 sq. This writer employs the terms *Mythus* (myth) in a peculiar sense, differing from that which is ordinarily connected with the term. He calls *Mythus* whatever has become part and parcel of a religion in an unhistorical way. An Evangelical *Mythus* he defines as "a tale of this kind which has reference directly to Jesus, which is not, and is not regarded by us as the reflection of a fact, but as the precipitation of an idea conceived by his earliest adherents." (*Leben Jesu*, Vol. I, p. 97).

"no purely historical consciousness without the conviction that the chain of finite causes cannot be broken and that miracles are impossible." In this light he judges the Gospels. "If the Gospels are true historical records," he declares, "then the miraculous element cannot be eliminated from the life of Christ; if, on the contrary, miracles are irreconcilable with history, the Gospels cannot be historical sources."³⁰ To establish this theory it would have been necessary to demonstrate that miracles are impossible, but Strauss made no attempt to do so.

b) The myth theory is based on the further and equally gratuitous assumption that the Gospels are not genuine historical documents. For the formation of such a large circle of myths as Strauss pretends to find in the Gospels, a few decades are not sufficient; it would require centuries. Strauss himself perceived this inconsistency, and to avoid it, dated the Gospels from the second century,³¹ an assumption which, as we have seen on a previous page, is incompatible with their contents and opposed to the

³⁰ *Das Leben Jesu*, Vol. I, 13th ed., p. 73; *Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet*, Leipsic, 1864, p. 18.

³¹ *Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet*, p. 61. On D. F. Strauss see *Catholic Encyclopedia*, references in index volume; A. Meyenberg, *Leben Jesu Werk*, Vol. III, 1928, pp. 1 sqq.; F. Hettinger, *D. F. Strauss*, Freiburg, 1875.

testimony of Christian antiquity. To-day even the most radical critics admit that the Synoptic Gospels at least were written in the first century of the Christian era, more definitely between 70 and 90 A. D.³²

c) If the Gospels were merely a bundle of myths, the extraordinarily rapid expansion of the Christian religion soon after the death of Jesus would be inexplicable. As early as the first century, the Christians were cruelly persecuted both by Jews and pagans, and to accept their teaching was forbidden under threat of the severest penalties. That Christianity under such untoward conditions spread so rapidly to all parts of the then known world, is a sure proof that its doctrines, as laid down definitely in the Gospels and Apostolic Epistles, were not a collection of myths and sagas, but objectively certain truths. For myths and sagas which have no influence upon his fate either in this world or in the next, the average man would not have been ready to suffer persecution, still less to sacrifice his life, as so many of the early Christians did.

To-day the myth theory, invented by Strauss and popularized by Renan, has been discarded

³² Cfr. A. von Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur*, Vol. I, Leipsic, 1897, pp. 651 sqq.

by the majority of Rationalist Bible critics. Dr. Harnack says of it: "Strauss' contention that the Gospels contain a very great deal that is mythical, has not been borne out, even if the very indefinite and defective conception of what mythical means in Strauss' application of the word be allowed to pass."³³ Houston Stuart Chamberlain expresses himself even more sharply as follows: "At the beginning of the [nineteenth] century it was the fashion to explain everything as 'mythical.' In 1835, David Strauss followed the example given on every side and offered 'the idea of myth' as a 'key' to the Gospels. To-day everybody knows that this alleged key was nothing but a new, nebulous circumscription of an unsolved problem and that it is not some 'idea,' but solely a being which actually existed, the incomparable impression of a personality such as the world had never seen before, that can explain the origin of Christianity."³⁴

³³ *Das Wesen des Christentums*, Leipsic, 1920, p. 16. (English transl. by T. B. Saunders, *What Is Christianity?* 4th ed., London, 1923, p. 21.)

³⁴ *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Vol. I, 14th ed., Munich, 1922, pp. 194 sq. Chamberlain adds that modern historical research has rendered the mythological theory of Strauss so hopelessly obsolete that "one cannot read the writings of this honest man without yawning."

4. FERDINAND CHRISTIAN BAUR (d. 1860), the founder of the later Protestant Tübingen school, attempted to explain the Gospels by saying they were thesis-books, written by partisans of Peter and Paul, respectively, to uphold their opposing views in the dissensions that ensued after the death of Christ. St. Paul's divergent views of the teaching of the Master gave rise to deep-seated differences of opinion, which were defended by two opposing schools, the Petrine and the Pauline. About the middle of the second century the controversy between these two parties gave rise to a third, which tried to reconcile the existing differences and ultimately developed into the Catholic Church. This group fused the teaching of SS. Peter and Paul into one dogmatic system and represented these two Apostles as the co-founders of the Roman Church. This conflict between Petrinism and Paulinism gave birth to the four Gospels, as we know them, and to most of the other New Testament writings, which, according to Baur, were composed with the obvious purpose of reconciling the existing differences and reuniting the quarrelling factions. Only a few of these writings, to wit, the Epistle to the Romans, those to the Corinthians, that to the Galatians, and the

Apocalypse of St. John are of directly Apostolic provenience.

F. C. Baur's theory is disproved by two facts: first, that the Gospels, as we have already emphasized against Strauss, were composed in the second half of the first century, and, secondly, that the opposition which Baur construes between SS. Peter and Paul never actually existed.

At the present time Baur's theory no longer has any prominent adherents among Protestant exegetes. "The whole critical apparatus with which Baur attacked the ancient tradition," says Harnack, "is now justly regarded as worthless."³⁵ "The critical presuppositions of the school of Baur," says the same Rationalist critic in another place, "are, one may almost say, generally relinquished. The only vestige that remains of them in New Testament criticism is an indefinite distrust, a procedure like that employed by a malicious state's attorney, or at least a narrow-gauged method which clings to all sorts of details and, taking them for a basis, seeks to argue against plain and decisive observations. Instead of criticizing the Gospels as tendentious

³⁵ *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur*, Vol. I, p. 244.

pamphlets, an attempt is made to ferret out all manner of tendencies and to prove the existence of interpolations on a large scale, or a scepticism which places the probable and the improbable on the same footing.”³⁶

5. The most advanced Rationalist critics are not content with trying to eliminate supernatural revelation and miracles entirely from the life of Christ, but they go so far as to deny His very existence.

In the middle of the nineteenth century BRUNO BAUER (d. 1882), a Hegelian of the most extreme type, asserted that Jesus is a figment of an anonymous “proto-Evangelist,” out of whose writings the three other Gospels developed by the same process that gave birth to the first. Thus, what was originally fiction, under the influence of theology and faith grew to be history. He regarded Philo, Seneca, and the Gnostics as the real creative forces in the evolution of Chris-

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Preface, p. IX. On F. C. Baur and his theory see J. Haussleiter in the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. II, pp. 7-11. Cfr. A. B. Bruce, *F. C. Baur and his Theory of the Origin of Christianity*, New York, 1886; R. W. Mackay, *The Tübingen School and its Antecedents*, London, 1863; S. Berger, *F. C. Baur, Les Origines de l'École de Tubingue et ses Principes*, Strasbourg, 1867.

tianity, which arose as late as the reign of Marcus Aurelius, after which "clever men were busy for some forty years in the composition of the so-called Pauline Epistles. Only the framework of the new religion was Jewish; its spirit came from farther west; Christianity is really Stoicism becoming dominant in a Jewish metamorphosis."³⁷

This perverse theory, born of fanatical hatred and a boundless subjectivity, refutes itself; it aroused universal indignation and was forgotten even before the death of its author.³⁸ However, towards the close of the nineteenth century it was revived by Loman, Edwin Johnson, Al-lard Pierson, Naber, Robertson, Bournouf, and Hochard, and by a German critic writing under the pseudonym of "Verus." These writers, who drew part of their arguments from Strauss, traced the image of Christ as transmitted to us by the Evangelists to a mixture of mythological elements, derived partly from pagan and partly

³⁷ A. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (2nd ed. of the work *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*), Tübingen, 1921, pp. 148, 155 (Engl. tr., *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, London, 1927); J. Haussleiter in the *New Schaff-Herzog Encycl. of Relig. Knowledge*, Vol. II, p. 5.

³⁸ Schweitzer, *ibid.*, p. 160; Haussleiter, *l. c.*; E. Bauer, *Bruno Bauer und seine Gegner*, Berlin, 1842.

from Christian sources; but their theory fell flat by reason of its absurdity.

In the first decade of the twentieth century wide-spread attention was attracted by the teaching of A. KALTHOFF,³⁹ a German Protestant minister who had become a Social Democrat. He denied the existence of Jesus Christ and represented Him as a personification of the social hopes and aspirations of the proletariat of His time. Christianity, according to this writer, was the product of a social upheaval, of which the world has seen quite a few.

The unscientific character of this hypothesis renders it worthy of being buried together with that of Bruno Bauer, from which it differs mainly in this respect that hypercriticism has ceded the field to an absolute lack of common sense.

In contradistinction to the Kalthoff theory the latest school of radical Bible critics attempt to be strictly scientific by utilizing the rich treasures of Oriental mythology and the results of the new science of comparative religion. The chief representatives of this school are: William

³⁹ *Das Christusproblem*, 2nd ed., Jena, 1903; *Die Entstehung des Christentums*, Jena, 1904; *Was wissen wir von Jesus?* 2nd ed., Jena, 1912.

Benjamin Smith,⁴⁰ A. Jeremias,⁴¹ P. Jensen,⁴² K. Vollers,⁴³ and A. Drews. The latter's book,

⁴⁰ *Der vorchristliche Christus, nebst weiteren Vorstudien zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Urchristentums, mit einem Vorwort von Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel*, Giessen, 1906; 2nd ed., Jena, 1911. Smith was a professor of mathematics [sic!] in Tulane University, New Orleans, La., who had been led into the radical camp by the study of such German Rationalists as Baur, Kuenen, Wellhausen, Pfleiderer, Holstein, Volkmar, etc. (cfr. his preface to *Der vorchristl. Christus*, p. XIII). For some reason not apparent he published his work in German. Schmiedel in his "Vorwort" sums up Smith's theory as follows: The Christian religion antedates Christ. It is the development of a mystery religion widely spread among the Jews, and especially the Hellenists, between 100 B. C. and 100 A. D. Jesus never existed, but is a pagan deity camouflaged as protector, liberator, and redeemer. He was called "Nazarene," not from a city of that name, which never existed, but from a Hebrew word-stem which means protector. His "anastasis" originally meant "institution," namely, as Messiah, ruler of the world, judge of the living and the dead, but was changed into "resurrection" by the subsequent addition "from the dead." Though Schmiedel expressed his disagreement with Smith's theory in the preface he wrote for *Der vorchristliche Christus*, he was sharply censured even by radical critics for having assisted in publishing such an amateurish and unscientific book. The whole structure was reared on a passage in Epiphanius, where it is stated that the sect of the Nazareans, which was identical with the Christian Church, existed before the Christian era. Schwen showed that Smith's interpretation of Epiphanius was untenable and Joh. Weiss (*Jesus von Nazareth Mythos oder Geschichte?* p. 16) declared: "In spite of the great respect I bear for Dr. Schmiedel, I must say that he could have done something better than support this book by his prestige." (Cfr. Schmiedel's preface to the 2nd ed. of Smith's work, pp. viii sqq.)

⁴¹ *Babylonisches im Neuen Testament*, Leipsic, 1905.

⁴² *Das Gilgamesch-Epos in der Weltliteratur*, Strassbourg, 1906.

⁴³ *Die Weltreligionen in ihrem geschichtlichen Zusammenhange*, Jena, 1921.

Die Christusmythe (The Christ Myth), is a collection of the results of Rationalist Bible criticism during the last quarter of a century.

Fr. Wm. Foerster, a Protestant writer, aptly characterizes Drews' book as follows: "It is the work of a critical theoretician, who by sheer philosophical speculation and critical purposiveness has lost the power to perceive the living signs of personal reality. He strays far afield, yet fails to see what lies immediately before his eyes. He works with the details of mythological research, with the concepts of Oriental cults, puts the results together, combines them with the mind of a learned professor, picks out what fits into his perspective, consciously or unconsciously eliminates whatever might disturb his argument, and cuts the whole fabric into shape with the scissors of an apathetic logician, who would like to show himself absolutely free from preconceptions, but in matter of fact is full of prejudice, since he is completely governed by the dissolving tendency of our radical age. He decrees that the figure of Christ should appear as a mere myth, a fantastic invention of the religious instinct; he decrees that Jesus never existed, and thus his will is the father of the whole argument. This is the only way in which we can explain the

incredible artificiality of his combinations and exegetical stunts." ⁴⁴

The same judgment, though perhaps in a somewhat milder form, may be pronounced on the whole school of Drews and his immediate predecessors.

The authenticity and credibility of the New Testament is not disproved by the radical negations which we have been considering, but, on the contrary, all who have eyes to read can see that not only the four Gospels, but also the Epistles of St. Paul and the other New Testament writings loudly protest against the misuse of historical documents practiced by the critics whose works we have just reviewed. ⁴⁵

6. The modern *evolutionary hypothesis* was applied to the Gospels by ALBRECHT BENJAMIN RITSCHL (d. 1889), who may be regarded as the father of the dominant "Liberal" school in Protestant theology and exegesis, of which Adolf von Harnack is the acknowledged leader, and which has infected even a few Catholic Modernists. This school upholds the authenticity of the

⁴⁴ FR. Wm. Foerster, *Autorität und Freiheit*, 19th to 21st ed., Kempten, 1922, p. 89.

⁴⁵ An able refutation of this school in F. C. Conybeare (Prot.), *The Historical Christ*, London, 1914.

Synoptic Gospels and admits their credibility, though with certain limitations.⁴⁶ According to the leaders of this school (Harnack, Weizsäcker, Bousset, Jülicher) the Gospels deal not with the Jesus of history, but with the Christ of dogma, in whom His followers believed at the time these documents were written. They describe the belief of the first Christians and echo their thoughts about Jesus and His teaching. Hence, they do not give us an account of the original facts, but are the product of a historical development, strongly influenced by dogmatic speculation, Messianic hopes, rabbinic doctrines, Oriental mysticism, and Greek philosophy. "The Gospels," writes, *e. g.*, A. Jülicher, "are not historical records, but doctrinal treatises, composed for purposes of propaganda. To expect their authors to pay due attention to the historical nexus of events, would be unfair. It would be still more unfair to demand of them an objective historical understanding of the religion of

⁴⁶ A. von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, Leipsic, 1920, p. 14 (English tr., *What is Christianity?* p. 16). On A. B. Ritschl, his life and teaching, see the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. X, pp. 43-46; A. E. Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, Edinburgh, 1899; A. T. Swing, *The Theology of Albert Ritschl*, New York, 1901; J. Arr, *Ritschlianism: Exposition and Critical Essays*, London, 1903; E. A. Edghill, *Faith and Fact: A Study of Ritschlianism*, London and New York, 1910.

Jesus. What the Evangelists are interested in, is to emphasize the supernatural, the incomparable, and incomprehensible; what is of the greatest importance to them is not that which is well authenticated in the sense in which we understand the term, but that which seems best calculated to remove doubts in the divinity of Christ and to strengthen confidence in Him and His cause, as, for example, the story of the transfiguration, of the open tomb, of the raising of dead men to life, etc.”⁴⁷ “In spite of all these deficiencies,” he continues, “the three [Synoptic] Gospels are a valuable source, not only for the history of the community which has enshrined its ideal Christ in them, but also, and in an even higher degree, for the history of Jesus. . . . While the Johannine Jesus might be taken for the hero of a religious epic, the Synoptics grapple too arduously with materials which they do not understand and which frequently resist their efforts. The real Jesus, whom they have received, stands so far above the one whose image they construe from the Old Testa-

⁴⁷ *Die Religion Jesu und die Anfänge des Christentums bis zum Nizänum*, in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, ed. by Hinneberg, Teil I, Abtlg. IV, 1², Berlin and Leipsic, 1904, p. 44; C. Weizsäcker, *Das apostolische Zeitalter*, 3rd ed., Tübingen, 1902, pp. 369-401, 513-538; W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 2nd ed. by G. Krüger, Göttingen, 1921, pp. 33-77, 154-183.

ment or the Babylonian mythology, from Jewish literature and folklore, from primitive Christian theology and poetry, that the suggestion that we have here only different strata of the same myths or ideas of personified activity, is worse than absurd." ⁴⁸

As professed adherents of the so-called historico-critical school, the adherents of this theory consider it their mission to substitute for the Christ of faith the Jesus of history, to discover "the Gospel within the Gospel," ⁴⁹ to shell the historical kernel out of its legendary hull. In doing so they follow the rule that facts and doctrines which presuppose a divine revelation and supernatural power cannot be accepted as historical, but must be attributed to the belief of the Christian community about 70-100 A. D.

a) The evolutionary hypothesis as applied by these men to the Gospels is admittedly based on purely internal criteria, and, hence, to carry its point, would have to demonstrate the historical inaccuracy of the Gospels by internal evidence and disprove the arguments alleged in favor of their credibility. This it has not even made an attempt to do. The Gospels contain no contradictions, and the different manner in which the

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁴⁹ Harnack, *What Is Christianity*, pp. 16 sqq.

same facts are reported by the four Evangelists does not prove their unreliability, but rather their independence, and can be satisfactorily explained by their personal peculiarities, the special purpose for which each one wrote, and the diverse requirements of the prospective readers.

b) The contents of the Gospels make it evident that they were written to present the life and teaching of Christ in its historical reality, and not as transformed and sublimated by the belief of the early Christians. This can be seen plainly in the idea of the Messias, His aims and activities, which, according to the testimony of the Gospels, prevailed among the disciples of Jesus up to the day of His Ascension. This idea was diametrically opposed to that which governed the Apostles after the Descent of the Holy Ghost. Instead of the secular kingdom expected in the Gospels, we now have the spiritual kingdom of the Church; the Messias is no longer an earthly monarch, but the glorified Son of God, the invisible head of the Church. Such was the belief of the followers of Christ at the time the Gospels were composed. If the evolutionary theory were correct, the Gospels, reflecting the belief of the Christian Church about 70-100, could not record the unrealized Messianic expectations of the disciples about the year 30.

In matter of fact the New Testament writings, composed from about 40 to 100 A. D., are a faithful mirror both of the imperfect faith of the disciples during the life-time of Jesus and of the clarified religious consciousness of the early Christian community in the Apostolic age. That both accounts were received and circulated at the same time without provoking contradiction, is the most convincing evidence that both are based on truth, in other words, that the belief of the Apostolic Church was preceded by the somewhat one-sided belief of the first disciples, which, however, embraced faith in the divinity of Christ.

The evolutionary hypothesis, which rejects a large portion of the Gospels as legendary, can be entertained only by those who hold that the supernatural is impossible and must therefore be eliminated as unhistorical wherever it occurs in the records of the human race. But this is not enlightened historical criticism, it is prejudiced naturalism.⁵⁰

The Other New Testament Books and the Old Testament.—The other books of the New Testa-

⁵⁰ An able discussion and refutation of all these theories is contained in Lagrange's *Les Sens du Christianisme*, Paris, 1918; Eng. transl., *The Meaning of Christianity*, by W. S. Reith, New York, 1920.

ment, as well as those of the Old Testament, are dealt with in the same arbitrary fashion by the Rationalist critics. In the last analysis the motive which induces them to deny the authenticity and credibility of these writings is unwillingness to admit the supernatural. Consequently the same method of demonstration must be applied against all of them, and there is no need of going into the matter at greater length here.

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CHAPTER II

THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF REVELATION

In the preceding chapter we have demonstrated the credibility of the documents that embody the Christian Revelation. This Revelation appeared at a definite time in the history of the human race. *Where did it come from?*

The Vatican Council defines: "The same holy Mother Church holds and teaches . . . that it pleased His [*i. e.*, God's] wisdom and bounty to reveal Himself and the eternal decrees of His will to mankind by another and supernatural way, as the Apostle says: 'God, having spoken on divers occasions and in many ways in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by His Son.'¹

. . . Further, this supernatural revelation, according to the universal belief of the Church, declared by the sacred Synod of Trent, is contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles

¹ Heb. I, 1 sq.

themselves, by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand, have come down even to us.”²

This does not mean, of course, that revelation is something altogether novel. As the supernatural in general adapts itself to nature and raises it to higher perfection, so the religious content of revelation may start from laws, forms of worship, and customs belonging wholly to the domain of natural religion, inform them with a new spirit, and make them subservient to the supernatural end of man.

It will be our task in this chapter of our treatise to demonstrate the supernatural, divine origin of the religious truths inculcated in the Old and New Testaments. We shall do so by means of the internal and external criteria of revelation.

§ I. DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

We maintain that the religion of the Old Testament had its origin in divine revelation.

A religion which is distinguished for its truth,

² “[*Ecclesia docet*] . . . placuisse eius [*sc. Dei*] sapientiae et bonitati, alia eaque supernaturali via se ipsum ac aeterna voluntatis suae decreta humano generi revelare dicente Apostolo: ‘*Multi-fariam multisque modis olim Deus loquens patribus in Prophetis*’

purity, and sublimity, and the divine origin of which is confirmed by miracles and prophecies, must have its source in divine revelation. Now this is the case with the religion of the Old Testament. Therefore, the religion of the Old Testament has its source in divine revelation.

A. The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament

I. The religion of the Old Testament, from Genesis to the Second Book of Machabees inclusively, is purely Monotheistic. It is true that, favored by the natural inclination of the people, the worship of false gods repeatedly became a peril to Jewish Monotheism. However, idolatry never displaced the true faith, but invariably made way before the opposition of the prophets. Monotheism is met with also outside the Old Testament; but it is either less clearly defined, as among certain primitive nations of the present time, or was of short duration, as in the days of Lao-tse in China.⁸

novissime diebus istis locutus est nobis in filio.' Haec porro supernaturalis revelatio, secundum universalis Ecclesiae fidem, a sancta Tridentina Synodo declaratam, continetur in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus."—Sess. III, c. 2 (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, n. 1785-1787).

⁸ See Vol. I of this *Handbook*, pp. 236 sq.

Yahweh, the one God of the Old Testament, created the world, Heaven and earth, out of nothing. This concept of creation in its pure and unequivocal form can be found nowhere among the pagan nations or philosophers of antiquity, with possibly one exception, that of Lao-tse.

The Jewish belief in creation was intimately bound up with a belief in Providence and the divine government of the world. This latter dogma is also found in some of the pagan religions, but a uniform and definite government of the universe is impossible under paganism because the gods themselves are necessarily subject to Fate and, in consequence of their conflicting interests, disturb, nay, cross one another in their activities. Among the Israelites, on the other hand, Yahweh governs the world and mankind with unlimited power and absolute freedom.

2. To the belief of the Jews in God corresponded their worship of Him. The religious cult of Israel is a symbol of the nation's absolute submission to Yahweh. This is most clearly manifested in the sacrifices of the Old Law. The offering of valuable gifts is an indication of that perfect subjection which man owes to God as his supreme Lord, while the smaller gifts

remind him that, in offering sacrifices, the main thing is not the external ceremony, but the interior sentiment of humility and obedience.

That the Jewish forms of worship can be paralleled in some respects among the pagan nations of the Orient, proves with what care local conditions and the character and traditions of nations were taken into account in the institution of religious worship, but it does not justify the conclusion that Jewish and pagan religious practices were of equal value. The few points of resemblance between them are more than offset by important differences. Superstition, magic, and sorcery, which permeate the whole religious fabric of Babylonia and Egypt, are absent in Israel, where the use of oracles was strictly forbidden,⁴ and the religious rites without exception bear the stamp of noble simplicity, purity, and truth.

3. Closely bound up with dogma and religious worship is morality. The moral code of the Old Testament is based upon the dogmatic teaching of Moses and the prophets as well as upon the moral law of nature. While it is in some respects inferior to that of the New Testament, the ethical teaching of the Old Testament far transcends that of all pagan religions.

⁴ Deut. XVIII, 10 sq.; 1 Kings XXVIII, 3, 9.

The kernel of Old Testament morality is the commandment of the *love of God*, supplemented by that of the love of neighbor. The law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"⁵ which was utterly unknown to the pagan religions, exercised a restraining influence upon the Mosaic code. Thus the *lex talionis*: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," which is also found in the Codex of Hammurapi, is softened by the permission to exact a pecuniary fine in cases where there was no question of murder. A clear-cut distinction is drawn between murder and manslaughter, and the right of seeking an asylum is conceded to those guilty of the latter. "Thus, while the ancient Semitic custom of exacting revenge for bloodshed is retained, it is shorn of its most objectionable feature. . . . All in all: while other laws of antiquity contain occasional humane traits, we nowhere find such a noble spirit of humanity penetrating the whole moral code, as it does among the Israelites."⁶

In the Ten Commandments the precept of charity is separated into its principal constituents and applied to definite conditions. Aside from

⁵ Lev. XIX, 18.

⁶ N. Peters, *Die Religion des Alten Testaments* in Esser-Mausbach, *Religion, Christentum, Kirche*, Vol. II, 3rd ed., pp. 85 sq.

the Third Commandment, the whole Decalogue is essentially the simple expression of the moral law of nature. Hence, it need not surprise us if we find similar laws among pagan nations. "But what raises the commandments of the second table above all the parallel laws of other religions, is the prohibition of coveting the wife or property of one's neighbor."⁷

Some of the Mosaic precepts concerning food and personal cleanliness also have their parallels among the pagan nations, more especially among those related to Israel. It is, of course, possible that these precepts may have originated in an ancient belief in demons rather than in "natural repugnance and hygienic considerations";⁸ but the religion of the Old Testament ennobled them and gave them a higher meaning by transforming them into means of spiritual purification.

Between the famous Code of Hammurapi and the Mosaic law there are a number of essential differences, which may be briefly described as follows: (1) In the Mosaic law the element of responsibility before God is clearly emphasized, whereas this fundamental religious motive is absent from the Code of Hammurapi, even

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 94.

though several gods are invoked in its introduction. (2) Concupiscence is nowhere forbidden in the Code of Hammurapi, whereas at the head of the Mosaic law we find several commandments beginning with the words, "Thou shalt not covet." (3) The law of Moses pays due regard to the love which a man owes to his neighbor and opposes selfishness by extremely humane provisions concerning the payment of debts, the treatment of slaves, the protection of widows and orphans, hospitality toward strangers, etc.; whereas the Code of Hammurapi hardly ever rises beyond the level of strict legality. (4) The law of the Old Testament includes precepts for the limitation of wealth, whereas the Code of Hammurapi has nothing of the kind, but allows everyone to obtain permanent possession of the land of his neighbor. (5) The Mosaic law proscribes the practice of keeping prostitutes in the Temple, while the Code of Hammurapi contains detailed provisions with regard to the rights and duties of this class of women. (6) The penal laws of the Pentateuch are, on the whole, milder than those of the Codex Hammurapi, more especially in regard to the transgression of property rights; in no less than thirty-four cases, among which are several that to us seem rather trivial, the Code of Hammurapi inflicts

the death penalty. Human life is far more highly valued in the law of Moses.⁹

The religion of the Old Testament, therefore, in its essential features, is not only free from contradiction, but so completely transcends all the extra-Biblical religions in purity and perfection that natural causes cannot explain the difference. Hence we may infer, if not with full certainty, then at least with a high degree of probability, that the religion of Israel had a supernatural and divine origin. In this conclusion we are confirmed by the unconvincingness of the objections raised against our thesis.

Objections Refuted

It is first of all objected that some of the doctrines, provisions, and occurrences peculiar to the Old Testament religion are of such a nature as to impair, nay, to offset entirely its purity and perfection. Attention is called to the selfishness, repentance, anger, and hatred attributed to Yahweh, to the cruelty with which He punishes trivial offenses, to the way in which He hardened the heart of Pharaoh and rewarded the mendacity of the Egyptian midwives. It is

⁹ J. Nikel, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte der orientalischen Forschungen* (Biblische Zeitfragen, 2. Folge, 7: *Moses und sein Werk*), 4th ed., Münster, 1921, pp. 31 sq.

charged against the religion of Israel that Abraham and Jephthe with divine approval sacrificed human beings, while in other passages of the Old Testament all sacrifices are rejected as worthless. The polygamous practices of the Patriarchs, the sexual life of David and Solomon, the marriage of the Prophet Osee, are said to be incompatible with the alleged purity of the Old Testament religion. The same objection is raised against the deception of Pharaoh, the spoliation of the Egyptians before the Exodus, the extermination of the inhabitants of Chanaan by the Jews, and the terrible threats contained in some of the Psalms.

Refutation.—The alleged *selfishness of Yahweh*, in claiming man's whole love¹⁰ and describing Himself as "a jealous God,"¹¹ is merely a necessary consequence of the divine nature. God would contradict His own essence if He, who is the highest good and final goal of all creation, in whose possession alone man can find the full perfection of his nature, did not demand absolute submission from His creatures.

In ascribing to God human passions, such as anger and repentance,¹² the Old Testament em-

¹⁰ Deut. VI, 5.

¹¹ Deut. VI, 15.

¹² Ex. IV, 14; Gen. VI, 6.

employs figurative language and accommodates itself to the anthropomorphic notions of an unlearned people. Doctrinally it inculcates the immutability of God¹³ and expressly declares that He "is not a man that he should repent."¹⁴ This declaration is all the more remarkable since, a few verses ahead,¹⁵ God Himself is quoted as saying: "It repenteth me that I have made Saul king." The same rule must be applied to the texts which appear to deny the divine attribute of omnipresence,¹⁶ since other texts leave no doubt whatever that the Israelites believed God to be everywhere.¹⁷

The accusation that God was *excessively cruel in the punishment of minor offences* is based mainly on Gen. II, 17: "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." This accusation is based on the hypothesis that the death penalty was threatened in punishment for an offense which *per se* concerned a matter of very small importance. But it was really a test of loyalty, and the penalty was inflicted for an act of wilful disobedience

¹³ Num. XXIII, 19.

¹⁴ 1 Kings XV, 29.

¹⁵ 1 Kings XV, 11.

¹⁶ Gen. XI, 5.

¹⁷ Ps. CXXXVIII, 8 sqq.; Am. IX, 2 sqq.

towards a clearly recognized divine command. Therein lay the gravity of the sin of our First Parents. That God, when He gave this command, foresaw the transgression, yet did nothing to prevent it, must not be interpreted as a sign of cruelty. To do so would be to declare the creation of rational beings endowed with free will as contrary to the essence of God and therefore impossible. God must demand submission from every rational creature endowed with free will, while, on the other hand, freedom necessarily implies liberty to disobey.

In the light of the teaching of the Pentateuch, and of the Old Testament in general, on the holiness of God and His hatred of sin, the statement that He *hardened the heart of Pharaoh* and of other sinners¹⁸ cannot be interpreted in the sense that He positively caused these men to resist His commandments. To influence the human will in this manner would be contrary to the very essence of divine holiness, and also of divine wisdom, for it would have been anything but wise on the part of God if He had ordered Pharaoh to release the Israelites and at the same time positively moved the King's will in the opposite direction, thus making it impossible

¹⁸ Cfr. Ex. IV, 21; XIV, 17; Is. VI, 9 sq.; Prov. XVI, 4.

for him to obey the divine command. Hence, the resistance of Pharaoh and other sinners mentioned in the passages under discussion must be understood as taking place with divine tolerance. God did not *cause*, but *permitted* Pharaoh to resist. If the king's act is represented as an act of God, the purpose manifestly is to call attention to the fact that God is the first and universal cause of all being and action, who ordains all things, even though they are made to serve an evil purpose. At the same time the Old Testament teaches just as positively that every sin is a free-will act. In the opinion of the Old Testament hagiographers, which is confirmed by rational reflection—both factors, the universal causality of God and the free will of man, co-operate in the commission of sin.

As regards the *attitude of Yahweh toward the Egyptian midwives*,¹⁹ there is no reason to interpret His treatment of these women as a reward for their deceit. For it is not certain that the answer they gave to Pharaoh (namely, that the Hebrew women were skilled in obstetrics, and gave birth to their babies before the Egyptian midwives could reach them),²⁰ was false, while, on the other hand, the Bible expressly

¹⁹ Ex. I, 15 sqq.

²⁰ Ex. I, 19.

says that these midwives were prospered "because they feared God."²¹

*God's command to Abraham to offer his only-begotten son as a holocaust*²² must not be interpreted as a command to slaughter a human being in any objectionable sense of the term, as would have been the case if the initiative to sacrifice Isaac had come from Abraham himself. God, who gave the command, is Lord over life and death, and can dispose of His creatures as He sees fit. Abraham was merely an instrument which God employed in much the same way as He employs the powers of nature when a storm or an earthquake demands human victims.

*The sacrifice of Jephthe*²³ is of a different type. Jephthe, according to all appearances, acted entirely of his own accord when he slew his daughter as a sacrifice to the Lord, having been neither commanded nor authorized to do so. But his was merely an individual case, involving a manifest transgression of the Mosaic law, which expressly forbade the Israelites to sacrifice their sons and daughters as a holocaust to Yahweh.²⁴ The sacrifice of Jephthe can claim no special importance

²¹ Ex. I, 21.

²² Gen. XXII, 2; cfr. Paffrath-Kean, *Stock Charges against the Bible*, St. Louis, 1927, pp. 110 sq.

²³ Judg. XI, 30 sqq.

²⁴ Deut. XII, 31; Jer. XIX, 3 sqq.

because this man was by no means one of the leaders of the Jewish nation, but belonged to the common people. Some Old Testament scholars think that the actual killing of Jephthe's daughter is not beyond all reasonable doubt.

If God, through the mouth of the prophets,²⁵ on several occasions reprobated the *sacrifices* which He Himself commanded through the law of Moses, the inconsistency is apparent rather than real. As the context in each instance shows, it is not the sacrifices as such that are censured, but the fact that they had deteriorated into purely external rites. The sacrifices which had been the living expression of inward devotion in the time of the Patriarchs and Judges, at this later period of Jewish history had become empty formalities without value or content. Some did not scruple to offer sacrifices to the Lord with a rebellious heart and blood-stained hands.²⁶ Hence, the warning of the Prophet Isaias²⁷ to cleanse the heart of sin, to cease to do evil, and to learn to serve God in justice and charity. God's refusal to accept the sacrifices of the Jews was calculated to recall that disloyal people to their senses and to cause them to re-

²⁵ Cfr. Am. V, 21 sqq.; Is. I, 11 sqq.; Jer. VI, 20.

²⁶ Is. I, 13 sqq.

²⁷ Is. I, 16 sq.

store the sacrificial worship of the Mosaic law to its pristine purity.

Polygamy among the Patriarchs and the Israelites in general was not a divine institution, but an abuse which God *tolerated* in order to prevent greater evils. Polygamy was widespread among the nations of the ancient East, and since it is not *per se* opposed to the natural law, God could tolerate it. He did so in view of the unfavorable disposition of the Jews. That He desired marriage to be monogamous is indicated by the way He instituted it in Paradise and by the fact that, at the time of the Deluge, when polygamy seemed desirable in the interest of a more rapid propagation of the human race, Noe and his sons had only one wife each. Polygamy was limited to a certain extent by the law of Moses,²⁸ which equalized the number of marriageable men and women, and thus provided a husband for every woman, and also by the provision that when Israel got a king, he should "not have many wives."²⁹

The married life of David and Solomon undeniably falls below the moral standard which one would expect of men who occupied such

²⁸ Deut. XXIII, 1.

²⁹ Deut. XVII, 17; cfr. Paffrath-Kean, *Stock Charges against the Bible*, St. Louis, 1927, pp. 110 sq.

important positions in Israel. But the religion of the Old Testament cannot be justly blamed for the sexual aberrations of these two gifted rulers. Both David and Solomon simply transgressed the moral law, and their conduct, far from being approved by the official representatives of religion, is, on the contrary, severely rebuked and punished by them. The moral weakness of these two monarchs simply proves that God sometimes employs very defective instruments in the execution of His plans.

The divinely sanctioned *marriage of the Prophet Osee with a harlot*³⁰ was not an immoral relationship, but a regular matrimonial alliance. That the children of this union are termed "children of fornications" must be explained in the light of the ulterior purpose of the Prophet's marriage, which was designed to be a symbol of the relation that should exist between Yahweh and the Jewish nation. God still loved His people, even though they had broken faith with Him and worshipped idols.³¹

The demand which God caused to be addressed to *Pharaoh*, to let the Jews "go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to

³⁰ Os. I, 1 sqq.

³¹ Os. III, 1.

the Lord,"³² was not, as has been charged, a *fraudulent deception of the king*, but "a means to reveal Pharaoh's injustice and cruelty, which prevented the Jews from practicing their religion and to justify, from a purely human point of view, their departure from Egypt and the violent measures which they adopted in order to get away."³³

The accusation that *the Israelites robbed the Egyptians when they departed into the desert*, is based on an inaccurate interpretation of the Hebrew and Greek text. The term *commodare*, employed by the Latin Vulgate,³⁴ does not correspond either to the Hebrew word in the original text or to the Greek word *χράω* used by the Septuagint. The former term in the form here employed means "to give willingly," and the latter, "to give, to concede." This is the true sense of the passage which the Vulgate renders, "*spoliaverunt Aegyptios*" (the Hebrew text has: *nizzēl = spoliavit*). Nor can it be said that the translation of the Vulgate is incorrect; for the word *spoliare* in itself does not, like its Hebrew and Greek synonyms, necessarily mean "to rob, to take possession of something without a just

³² Ex. III, 18.

³³ S. Weber, *Christliche Apologetik*, p. 219.

³⁴ "*Ut commodarent eis.*" (Ex. XII, 36).

claim," but may also signify "to collect things belonging to another (as a fair booty) and taking them along." That this is the sense in which the expression is used in Ex. XII, 36, follows from the immediately preceding phrase, "they gave willingly."³⁵ Hence, it is not necessary to attempt to justify the conduct of the Israelites by explaining that the property they took along with them was their own, which had been unjustly appropriated by the Egyptians, or that they left enough immovable property to indemnify their oppressors for what they took along, or that God, who is the absolute owner of all creation, simply transferred this property from the Egyptians to the Jews.

God commanded the Israelites "utterly to destroy" the inhabitants of Chanaan,³⁶ whose country was to be their exclusive possession.³⁷ Therefore the Jews did not act either unjustly or cruelly when they exterminated the native tribes and took possession of the land. They merely performed their duty by obeying a divine command. Neither can God be justly charged with

³⁵ Cfr. F. Hummelauer, S.J., *Commentarius in Exodum et Leviticum*, Paris, 1897, p. 126; Ign. Ottiger, S.J., *Theologia Fundamentalis*, Vol. I, pp. 393 sq.

³⁶ Ex. XXIII, 13; Deut. III, 2; Jos. VI, 2; XIII, 6; Judg. II,

I-4.

³⁷ Gen. XII, 7; Ex. XXXIII, 1; Deut. XXXIV, 4.

cruelty and injustice for giving them this command, for the "seven nations" which they were to displace, by their immoral life and the abominations of their idol worship, had fully deserved the severe punishment inflicted upon them.³⁸ The Old Testament expressly says that it was for this reason they were punished.³⁹ Their fate resembled that of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha. Nor did God commit an injustice in

³⁸ Cfr. Lev. XVIII, 3, 6-24.

³⁹ Gen. XV, 16; Wisd. XII, 3-6. On the "cruelties commanded in the Old Testament" see Paffrath-Kean, *Stock Charges against the Bible*, pp. 112 sqq. Fr. Kugler, S.J., rightly observes that, once the text is cleared of faulty translations, it is found that the Jews were comparatively mild in their treatment of their enemies. "We read of cruelties in Assyro-Babylonian history that would have been impossible among the Israelites. Merely to please the humors of a king, the jaws of a captive are bored through, a dog's chain is fastened about his neck, and he is put into a cage. Or again, to gratify a passing royal whim, a victim is dragged in and skinned alive. Leafing further through history, we see a Roman emperor illuminating the imperial gardens with human torches and lightly strumming a lyre to the cracklings of human flesh. And, a little further still, we see the devout Roundhead spitting Irish babies on his spears, massacring helpless old women in the Bull Ring, fitting pitch-caps on the heads of promising boys. And, in the very latest chapter, we see men's passions loose in the World War, and blood and carnage the order of the day. Are you amazed, then, that, under the circumstances, those Jews of long ago did not walk about with all the detachment of conscientious objectors? Man has traveled far on the road of civilization since that day; yet in the heat of war, how near he still is to those Jews in their unsubdued primitive passion!" (Paffrath-Kean, *op. cit.*, pp. 114 sq.)

taking the land from the Chanaanites and giving it to the Jews. For, apart from the fact that this measure was a just punishment, God, as the Creator and supreme Lord of the universe, undoubtedly has the right to take property away from one person or nation and give it to another according to His good pleasure.

The utter extermination of the native population of Chanaan was, moreover, intended as a means of preserving the national character of Israel and the purity of its religion. If this purpose was not attained, but, on the contrary, the Jewish people and their religion suffered great injury from their pagan environment, this was attributable to the fact that the divine command to destroy the inhabitants of the Promised Land had not been faithfully executed.⁴⁰

The so-called *imprecatory* or "*cursing*" *Psalms*⁴¹ are not the expression of purely human wrath and revenge. It is not any wrong suffered by himself that moves the psalmist to curse his enemies and wish them evil, but the conviction that his cause is the cause of God and therefore his enemies are God's enemies. A burning zeal for God and His honor is the *leitmotif* of these hymns. God is holy and therefore must hate

⁴⁰ Cfr. Judg. II, 1-4.

⁴¹ Ps. XVII, XXXIV, LI, LVIII, LXVIII, CVIII.

moral evil and demand that it be avenged, and so the imprecatory Psalms fiercely demand the destruction of all who oppose Him and who attempt to frustrate His designs. But God in His mercy offers forgiveness to the repentant sinners, and hence the imprecatory Psalms promise salvation and happiness to all who seek Him.⁴² It must, of course, be admitted that the "cursing" Psalms are not inspired by Christian charity. The truth is, as Fr. Hugh Pope observes, that these Psalms are essentially Jewish, and "must be read in the light of the Old Law which begot them; when once we start trying to read 'the Law of Grace' into the Law of Moses, we get into difficulties. The *lex talionis* was a reality for Israel as it was for Babylonia in the days of Hammurapi."⁴³

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⁴² Ps. LXVIII, 33.

⁴³ Pope, *The Catholic Student's "Aids" to the Bible*, Vol. I, London, 1913, p. 281. Cfr. N. Peters, *Die Religion des Alten Testaments* in Esser-Mausbach, *Religion, Christentum, Kirche*, Vol. II, 5th ed., p. 89; J. A. Ryan in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 593; M. Seisenberger, *Practical Handbook for the Study of the Bible*, revised ed., New York, 1925, p. 286.

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B. *Miracles and Prophecies*

The very substance of the Old Testament religion, as we have seen, permits us to conclude that it was of supernatural, divine origin. This conclusion, however, does not yield more than a degree of probability. Full certainty of the divine origin of that religion is obtained only through the miracles wrought and the prophecies perfectly fulfilled in its confirmation. We shall deal with these in two separate groups, of which the first comprises the miracles and prophecies of the early period of Jewish history up to the death of Moses, the second, those of the post-Mosaic era.

I. The Miracles and Prophecies of the Early Period to the Death of Moses

a) *Miracles*

The miracles of this period may be divided into two classes: (1) the theophanies reported in connection with primitive revelation, and (2)

the miracles wrought by Moses in confirmation of his mission.

1. Theophanies

Genesis repeatedly ⁴⁴ relates that God visibly appeared to men as lawgiver, judge, and prophet of future events. These apparitions served a two-fold purpose: (1) they illustrated the Monotheistic concept of the Deity in a clear and easily intelligible fashion; (2) they revealed to man, in a manner entirely adapted to his understanding, that God had spoken to him.

The miraculous character of these apparitions is beyond doubt. For though the sensible perception of God can in no wise be compared with the supernatural, spiritual intuition of the Divine Essence, it nevertheless requires a special intervention on the part of the Almighty, whereby He enters into immediate visible communication with man.

The Old Testament theophanies must not be classed with the alleged apparitions of pagan gods, which rest upon polytheistic presuppositions, are rich in mythical traits, and, for the most part, betray, by the manner in which the gods are made to communicate with men, that

⁴⁴ Cfr. Gen. II, III, VI, VIII, XV, XX, XXVIII.

they are not historical, but belong to the domain of poetry and legend.

2. The Miracles of Moses

The miracles of Moses are of two kinds. Some of them were wrought for the express purpose of confirming his supernatural mission. Others, like the passage of the Jews through the Red Sea or the miraculous provision of water in the desert, while also closely connected with the task God had entrusted to Moses, did not serve the express purpose of confirming his mission. For the sake of clearness and perspicuity we shall consider only the former class of miracles. For these to be regarded as evidence confirming the divine origin of the Old Testament religion, of which Moses was the founder, it must be shown: (a) that the signs wrought by Moses were intended to attest his divine mission; (b) that these signs transcended the known powers of nature, and (c) that they had God for their cause.

a) *The signs wrought by Moses were intended to confirm his divine mission.* These signs were: the transformation of a rod into a serpent, performed at Mount Horeb before the whole Jewish people,⁴⁵ in order that they might believe

⁴⁵ Ex. IV, 1-5.

that Moses was sent by God; the appearance of leprosy on the hand of Moses and its equally sudden disparition;⁴⁶ the turning of Aaron's rod into a serpent before Pharaoh;⁴⁷ the ten plagues which Moses called down upon Egypt,⁴⁸ and the punishment inflicted upon the leaders of the schism, Core, Dathan, and Abiron.⁴⁹

That the two first-mentioned signs were intended to prove the supernatural mission of Moses is expressly stated by Holy Scripture itself.⁵⁰ Moses assures the Lord that the Israelites will not credit his assertion that he had a divine mission; God commands him to cast his rod upon the ground, and when he does so, the rod is turned into a serpent and the serpent turned back into a rod. Then Moses is told to put his hand into his bosom, and when he does so and brings it out, it is "leprous as snow." Then God tells him to put it back again, and behold, the leprosy is gone. Thereupon God instructs Moses to work these miracles before the people and tells him that if they refuse to believe him on the strength of these two signs, he should take water from the river and pour it upon dry land, whereupon it

⁴⁶ Ex. IV, 6 sq.

⁴⁷ Ex. VII, 9 sqq.

⁴⁸ Ex. VII to XII, 30.

⁴⁹ Num. XVI, 28 sqq.

⁵⁰ Ex. IV, 1 sqq.

will be turned into blood. Moses did as he was told, "and the people believed."⁵¹

Then Moses went to Pharaoh and told him that the Lord God of Israel had sent him,⁵² and performed similar signs in the royal presence.⁵³

The case of the *insurgents in the desert* is still clearer, as the text shows: "Moses said: By this you shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all the things that you see, and that I have not forged them out of my own head: If these men die the common death of men, and if they be visited with a plague, wherewith others also are wont to be visited, the Lord did not send me. But if the Lord do a new thing, and the earth opening her mouth swallow them down, and all things that belong to them, and they go down alive into hell, you shall know that they have blasphemed the Lord. And immediately as he had made an end of speaking, the earth broke asunder under their feet: and opening her mouth, devoured them with their tents and all their substance."⁵⁴

b) *The signs wrought by Moses transcended the known powers of nature.* This proposition

⁵¹ Ex. IV, 30 sq.

⁵² Ex. V, 1, 3.

⁵³ Ex. VII, 9 sq., 17.

⁵⁴ Num. XVI, 28 sqq.

needs no proof so far as the conversion of a rod into a serpent and the sudden healing of leprosy is concerned. The case is somewhat different with the *ten plagues*. These actually show some resemblance to natural phenomena which occur in Egypt as the result of the climate and the peculiar nature of the soil. But the manner in which the plagues came and went and were judged by the Egyptians, who were surely conversant with the conditions of their country, clearly indicates that these visitations were not ordinary phenomena of nature. Moses predicts the sequence in which they are to occur, and they happen exactly as foretold. He needs only to stretch out his hand, and the plague begins; he prays, and it stops. The land of Gessen, where the Israelites dwelt, was preserved from harm.⁵⁵ Only the first-born of the Egyptians were slain "in the passage of the Lord."⁵⁶ All this cannot be explained by the ordinary powers and laws of nature. Pharaoh and his advisers were well aware of this, for they called in the magicians, who were believed to command higher powers, expecting them to outdo Moses.⁵⁷

Nor can the destruction of Core and his fel-

⁵⁵ Ex. VIII, 22; IX, 26; X, 23.

⁵⁶ Ex. XII.

⁵⁷ Ex. VII, 11 sq.

low-conspirators be explained by natural means. The separation of these wicked men from the rest of the people by divine command, the prediction of their punishment, its peculiar nature and prompt infliction,⁵⁸ preclude the accidental co-operation of natural causes.

c) *The signs wrought by Moses must be ascribed to divine causation.* As the miracles performed by Moses exceeded the known powers of nature, their proper and ultimate cause must have been a spiritual power far transcending men and the material universe. Hence, they must have been wrought either by God or by some created spirit, good or evil. They cannot have been wrought by an evil spirit because their purpose was to convince the leaders and lawgivers of Israel that God had sent Moses to free the people from the oppression of the Egyptians and to instruct them in new doctrines and precepts. Since the evil spirits are constantly bent upon destroying religion and good morals, we cannot reasonably assume that they would employ their influence for the establishment and promotion of these factors. Moreover, if humanity was not to be delivered guiltlessly and irretrievably to the most grievous errors, God could

⁵⁸ Num. XVI, 24 sqq.

not have permitted the devil to interfere when He revealed Himself to men.

We arrive at the same conclusion if we consider the opposition between Moses and the magicians. Moses appeared before Pharaoh as a messenger sent by God and as the bearer of a divine command. Pharaoh refused to acknowledge Yahweh and called in his sorcerers to prove that the Egyptian gods were more powerful.⁵⁹ As a matter of fact they succeeded in imitating the three first signs;⁶⁰ but their serpents were devoured by the serpent of Moses, and from the fourth sign onward they were no longer able to keep step with him in producing extraordinary phenomena, but frankly acknowledged their defeat, exclaiming: "This is the finger of God!"⁶¹ Thus they paid involuntary tribute to the truth. Under such circumstances, where Hebrew Monotheism and Egyptian magic stood face to face, and a solemn judgment was to be passed on the comparative value of the two religions, God could not possibly permit Satan by some diabolical sleight-of-hand to gain the victory over His ambassador.

⁵⁹ Ex. V, 2; VII, 11 sqq.

⁶⁰ Ex. VII, 11 sq., 22; VIII, 7.

⁶¹ Ex. VIII, 18 sq.

Like the magicians, Pharaoh, too, regarded the God of the Hebrews as the author of the miracles wrought by Moses, since he repeatedly asked the latter to petition Yahweh to take the plagues away from Egypt.

To the testimony of the Egyptians is to be added that of the Israelites, who, in consequence of the miracles wrought by Moses, were so firmly convinced of his supernatural, divine mission that they followed him for forty years and willingly accepted from his hands innumerable laws and precepts, including such as imposed heavy burdens upon them, individually and as a nation.

Thus the supernatural mission of Moses as the lawgiver and principal founder of the Old Testament religion is placed beyond all doubt by the miracles which he wrought, and consequently that religion must be divine, for if God sent Moses to establish a religion, that religion must be His. But since Moses, the divinely-commissioned teacher of Israel, is our authority for the truths contained in the primitive revelation, upon which the religion of the Old Testament rests, the demonstration of the supernatural mission of Moses constitutes an argument for the divine origin of that religion.

b) Prophecies

The divine origin of the Old Testament religion is further confirmed by prophecies. These prophecies, like the miracles we have just examined, refer partly to the revelation preceding Moses, partly to that given through Moses himself. The former was given by God directly on the occasion of the theophanies mentioned above. Thus Noe received a prophecy about the beginning and course of the Deluge,⁶² Abraham was informed in advance of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha,⁶³ of the birth of Isaac,⁶⁴ of the great number of his descendants,⁶⁵ of the four hundred years' servitude of the Israelites in Egypt,⁶⁶ and their final conquest of Chanaan.⁶⁷ All these prophecies came true. That they were genuine prophecies follows from the miraculous character of the first three events mentioned and from the fact that, in every instance, there was question of occurrences which depended upon the free will of God and of

⁶² Gen. VI, VII.

⁶³ Gen. XVIII, 20 sqq.

⁶⁴ Gen. XVII, 15 sqq., XVIII, 10.

⁶⁵ Gen. XV, 4 sq.

⁶⁶ Gen. XV, 13.

⁶⁷ Gen. XV, 14.

man. The divine origin of these prophecies is furthermore guaranteed by the authenticity of the theophanies.

Those prophecies which serve to support the divine origin of the Mosaic revelation and through it of the religion of the Old Testament in general, are related to that religion partly in an immediate and partly in a mediate manner.

To the former class belongs the prophecy pertaining to the *Sabbatical year*, namely, that every sixth year the soil would yield as much fruit as in three ordinary years, in order that the people should not suffer want in the seventh year, which they had to dedicate to God.⁶⁸ The fulfilment of this prophecy can be seen from the fact that there is no record of a famine caused by the observation of the Sabbatical year among the Jews.⁶⁹ The lack of food in Bethsura during a "year of rest," of which we read in the first Book of the Machabees,⁷⁰ is expressly attributed to the fact that the foreign soldiers who had besieged the city "had eaten the residue of all that which had been stored up."⁷¹ To this may be added the consideration that a nation which had never ex-

⁶⁸ Lev. XXV, 21.

⁶⁹ Cfr. Jos. XXIV, 31; XXI, 43.

⁷⁰ I Mach. VI, 49, 53.

⁷¹ I Mach. VI, 53.

perienced the fulfilment of a divine promise would surely not have exposed itself again and again to the danger of famine, and Moses would not have instituted the Sabbatical year had he not been certain of its divine origin.

Moses could not have known the things he promised the people by natural means, as the crops of each sixth year depended upon the weather, and this in turn upon the free will of God. Consequently, the prediction with which we are dealing must be regarded as a prophecy in the strict sense of the term. It was given for the confirmation of the law laid down by God, in so far as its periodical fulfilment reminded the people of their obligation concerning the Sabbatical year, and at the same time enabled them to keep it.

Much the same can be said of the divine promise that the land would not be infested by enemies while the men of Israel were complying with their obligation of visiting the Temple three times each year, at the feasts of Easter, Pentecost, and the Tabernacles.⁷² Had this prophecy not been fulfilled, the celebration of the main holydays of the Jewish calendar would have become impossible, and some record of the fact would no doubt have reached us. Since this

⁷² Ex. XXXIV, 24.

is not the case, and the matter is one of great religious importance, we may justly conclude that Israel was never molested by its enemies while it celebrated its great festivals.

As this fact depended entirely on the free decision of the enemies of Israel, Moses could not have foreseen it by natural means, and hence we are again dealing with a genuine prophecy, which, like the one mentioned above, by its annually recurring fulfilment constituted a standing confirmation of the law given through Moses.

Finally, there is the promise of the highest earthly blessings given to the Jewish nation if they would observe the law, and the threat of manifold curses if they would neglect God's commandments.⁷³ In the latter case, the people together with their king were to be led into a strange country, where they were to "serve strange gods of wood and stone;"⁷⁴ their cities were to be besieged, and they were to eat the flesh of their own sons and daughters;⁷⁵ the whole nation was to be deported to Egypt and sold into bondage.⁷⁶ At the same time they were

⁷³ Deut. XXVIII.

⁷⁴ Deut. XXVIII, 36 sq.

⁷⁵ Deut. XXVIII, 52 sqq.

⁷⁶ Deut. XXVIII, 68.

assured that God would have mercy on His people and lead them back into their own land as soon as they would "return to Him and obey His commandments."⁷⁷

The fulfilment of these prophecies is attested by history. As long as Israel worshipped God and obeyed His laws—as under the leadership of Josue, David, Solomon, and a few other rulers from the Babylonian Captivity until the period of the Machabees—the people enjoyed peace and prosperity. But as soon as they turned away from God and neglected His service, they were visited by severe calamities. They had to serve strange nations,⁷⁸ were taken captive and led to Assyria,⁷⁹ Babylonia,⁸⁰ and Egypt,⁸¹ and suffered such dire want during various sieges that parents literally devoured their own offspring.⁸² In like manner the prophecy of the nation's return from captivity was fulfilled after the people had experienced a change of heart.⁸³

These events Moses could not possibly have

⁷⁷ Deut. XXX, 2.

⁷⁸ Judg. III, 8, 2 sqq.

⁷⁹ 4 Kings XV, 29.

⁸⁰ 4 Kings XXIV, 15; XXV, 7, 11.

⁸¹ 4 Kings XXV, 26; cfr. Josephus Flavius, *De Bello Iudaico*,

I. VI, c. 9, 2.

⁸² 4 Kings VI, 28 sq.; Lam. IV, 10; Bar. II, 2 sq.; cfr. Josephus,

I.c., VI, 3, 4.

⁸³ 1 Esdr. I; 2 Esdr. II.

foreseen by natural means because they one and all depended upon free-will acts of God and men. Accidental fulfilment is excluded by the constant and in itself by no means necessary connection between the conduct of Israel and the consequences of that conduct during a period extending over fifteen hundred years. Consequently, the predictions of Moses bear all the earmarks of true prophecy.

The Mosaic prophecies confirm the divine origin of the Old Testament religion because God appears in them as the avenger who rewards obedience and punishes disobedience to the law.

In addition to the prophecies which are immediately connected with the religion of the Old Testament, there are a number of others that demonstrate the divine character of that religion indirectly, *i. e.*, by showing that Moses had a supernatural, divine mission. We have already mentioned the Egyptian plagues and the punishment of Core, Dathan, and Abiron.

Moses, when he found the people murmuring against him and Aaron on the return of the spies from Chanaan, predicted that, with the exception of Josue and Caleb, not one of the men who were then over twenty years of age would enter the Promised Land, but all would die in the

desert.⁸⁴ This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter,⁸⁵ which proves that it was based upon divine revelation. For from his purely human knowledge Moses could not possibly have foreseen that among the many thousands of men who at that time had just attained their twentieth year, not a single one would live beyond the age of sixty. God Himself by this prophecy sustained the imperilled authority of Moses⁸⁶ and by striking the treacherous spies with sudden death,⁸⁷ assured the people that the remainder of the threatened punishments would not fail to materialize if they persisted in their obstinacy.

Another prediction which bears all the earmarks of genuine prophecy is that referring to the *manna*. When the people in the desert complained of lack of food and vented their dissatisfaction upon their leader, Moses promised that God would send food from heaven on the following day. The promise was kept, and for forty years the Israelites were nourished with the miraculous bread which covered the face of the earth like hoar frost every morning with the exception of the Sabbath.⁸⁸ This bread, as its effects

⁸⁴ Num. XIV, 22-37; Deut. I, 35 sq.

⁸⁵ Num. XXVI, 63 sqq.

⁸⁶ Num. XIV, 4.

⁸⁷ Num. XIV, 36 sq.

⁸⁸ Ex. XVI, 14, 22 sqq.

indicate, was not a natural food growing in the desert, but a supernatural gift of God,⁸⁹ and consequently Moses could not have had previous knowledge of its bestowal by natural means, but only through a special divine revelation, and hence the prediction he made with respect to it was a true prophecy, which the people justly regarded as a proof of his supernatural mission.

II. Miracles and Prophecies of the Post-Mosaic Period

Even after the death of Moses the religion of the Old Testament was confirmed and supported by frequent miracles and prophecies. This could not have been the case if God had not recognized it as His own work, for to assume that He could positively, by extraordinary demonstrations of power, confirm a religion falsely attributed to Him, would be incompatible with the divine veracity. The miracles and prophecies of the post-Mosaic period, therefore, constitute an indirect proof of the divine origin of the Old Testament religion. We shall briefly mention a few of them.

⁸⁹ Cfr. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, p. 604.

a) *Miracles*

The Book of Josue relates⁹⁰ that, when the Jews crossed the Jordan, "the waters that came down from above stood in one place, and swelling up like a mountain, were seen afar off from the city that is called Adom. . . ; but those that were beneath, ran down into the sea of the wilderness (which now is called the Dead Sea) until they wholly failed." The same book records that, after a siege of seven days, whilst the Israelites were marching for the seventh time around the city of Jericho, and the priests sounded the jubilee trumpets, as the Lord had commanded, the walls of the city collapsed.⁹¹ In view of the plain words of Scripture no natural explanation of these phenomena is possible. Nor can we assume that the devil had a hand in producing them, since both events served to confirm Josue as the divinely-appointed leader of Israel and the successor of Moses.⁹² Hence, the phenomena in question were genuine miracles.

A similar case is narrated in the Book of Judges.⁹³ When *Gedeon* was called by God to

⁹⁰ Jos. III, 15 sq.

⁹¹ Jos. VI, 8 sqq.

⁹² Jos. VI, 27.

⁹³ Judg. VI, 17.

deliver the Jewish nation, he asked for a sign by which he would be able to tell them that the call came from God. He was instructed to put a fleece of wool on the floor. He did so, and the fleece became first moist with dew, while all the ground around it was dry, and then the fleece remained dry while the ground round about was wet with dew. This phenomenon cannot be explained by purely natural causes, and diabolic intervention is excluded, since Gedeon, as the champion of the Israelitic religion and the destroyer of the altar of Baal,⁹⁴ was a friend of Yahweh. Therefore, the sign given to Gedeon was a true miracle wrought by God for the benefit of Israel and its religion.

The connection between miracle and religion is most clearly manifested in the sacrifice of the prophet *Elias*.⁹⁵ All Israel is assembled on Mount Carmel, where Elias, as the sole prophet of Yahweh, faces 450 priests of Baal. Each party has erected an altar and placed upon it a bullock for the sacrifice. A decision is to be made between Yahweh and Baal. He who sends fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice is to be recognized as the true God. The priests of Baal cried loudly all day, imploring their god to send

⁹⁴ Judg. VI, 27 sqq.

⁹⁵ 3 Kings XVIII, 19 sqq.

fire to kindle the sacrificial flame on the altar. But there was no response. Towards evening, Elias told the people to pour water upon the burnt-offering and upon the wood piled upon his altar; the water ran about the altar and filled a trench which he had dug for the purpose. Then the prophet uttered a short prayer, and lo and behold! fire fell from heaven and consumed the holocaust, the wood, the stones, the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench. That this was not a natural fire is evident from its effects. The demons cannot have had a hand in causing it, since the miracle was calculated to destroy their influence, and God, who wished to preserve by all means the Monotheism of Israel, could not have remained inactive when that religion was in peril. The people, therefore, judged correctly when they regarded the fire from heaven as a miraculous manifestation of the power of Yahweh and a splendid justification of His cult.⁹⁶

b) Prophecies

Josue predicted in great detail the passage of the Chosen People through the Jordan⁹⁷ and

⁹⁶ 3 Kings XVIII, 39.

⁹⁷ Jos. III, 13.

the fall of the fortified city of Jericho.⁹⁸ The miraculous character of these two events is in itself a convincing argument that their prediction was a genuine prophecy, which, in its fulfilment, together with the miracle itself, served to confirm the divine origin of the Mosaic religion.⁹⁹

The Prophet *Isaias* announced to King *Ezechias*,¹ who had asked Yahweh to manifest Himself as the true God,² that the Assyrian army would depart without harming the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The prediction was fulfilled. In the following night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men died in the camp of the Assyrians, and Sennacherib immediately departed for Ninive. This event could not have been foreseen or calculated by human means because the Assyrians had come to conquer the entire country and had advanced victoriously,³ and no one could have predicted that a rapid and devastating spread of the plague would cause them to give up their plans and start for home. The fulfilment of the prophecy and the

⁹⁸ Jos. VI, 5.

⁹⁹ Jos. III, 7.

¹ 4 Kings XIX, 32 sqq.

² 4 Kings XIX, 19.

³ 4 Kings XIX, 10 sqq.

manifest supernatural divine protection of which it was a proof, were calculated to support the efforts of King Ezechias, which were directed towards the cultivation of the religious life of the people, and thus they furnish an indirect confirmation of the divinity of the Mosaic cult.

Micheas foretold the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem ⁴ as a punishment for the sins of the people; he also predicted the Babylonian Captivity and the eventual return of the Jews to their native land.⁵ That this prediction must be regarded as a real prophecy is evidenced first by the considerable space of time intervening between the prophecy and its fulfilment and, secondly, by the fact that the events predicted were entirely dependent upon the free will of God and of men, and therefore could not be foreseen with certainty by any creature. Since the prophecies were given for the purpose of inducing the people to be faithful to the law of Moses, their fulfillment constitutes a supernatural confirmation of the divine origin of that law.⁶

⁴ Mich. I, 1-8, 9-16.

⁵ Mich. II, 12; IV, 10.

⁶ Cfr. Ign. Ottiger, *Theologia Fundamentalis*, Vol. I, pp. 372-379, 478-514.

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N. PETERS, *Die Religion des Alten Testaments in ihrer Einzigartigkeit unter den Religionen des alten Orients*, in ESSER-MAUSBACH, *Religion, Christentum, Kirche*, Vol. II, 5th ed., pp. 1-169.

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§ II. THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A) The Religion of the New Testament

The nature of the New Testament religion shows that it is based upon divine revelation.

A religion which contains no contradictions, but is in every respect worthy of God and fully responds to all the needs of men, and which is furthermore unique in its purity and perfection, must necessarily come from God, because human reason is not able to know the truths of

religion accurately, completely, and with certitude except by supernatural aid.⁷ Now Christianity is such a religion. Consequently, Christianity must be based on divine revelation.

We are here concerned solely with the positive side of the argument. Therefore, we shall confine ourselves to showing that the Christian religion is worthy of God and responds to all the needs of human nature. Its purity and sublimity will become manifest in the course of the demonstration. Its freedom from contradictions requires no formal proof, since this feature is substantially admitted by all, even the great majority of its enemies. The attempts to explain the origin of Christianity by purely natural means will be dealt with in a subsequent section of this treatise.

I. The Dogmatic Teaching of Christianity

The Christian Church in its dogmatic teaching closely follows that of the Old Testament, which it assimilates, develops, and perfects.

The idea of God is perfected by the revelation of the Trinity,⁸ which affords a deeper insight into the nature of the Godhead and at the same

⁷ V. *supra*, Pt. I, ch. II, pp. 47 sqq.

⁸ Matth. XXVIII, 19. Cfr. Pöhlle-Preuss, *The Divine Trinity*, 5th ed., St. Louis, 1925.

time lays the foundation for the understanding of the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Redemption.⁹

The origin, goal, and mission of man appear in a brighter light. God is the Creator and final end of men,¹⁰ but at the same time their loving Father.¹¹ The human soul possesses infinite value¹² because it has been created for a life of eternal beatitude in Heaven.

The Redemption of mankind by the Godman takes away the burden of guilt and reopens to fallen humanity the gates of Paradise.¹³

The means by which eternal salvation is attained (Baptism, Penance, the Holy Eucharist) offer spiritual grace in a material form admirably adapted to human nature.¹⁴

2. The Moral Teaching of Christianity

The moral teaching of Christianity is intimately bound up with its dogmas. Faith is the foundation of morality. The divine law ap-

⁹ John III, 16. Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, 5th ed., St. Louis, 1925; *Soteriology*, 5th ed., St. Louis, 1927.

¹⁰ John XVII, 3.

¹¹ Matth. VI, 26 sqq.; John I, 12.

¹² Matth. XXVI, 26.

¹³ Matth. XXVI, 28; John I, 29; III, 36.

¹⁴ Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *The Sacraments*, Vol. I, 5th ed., St. Louis, 1927, pp. 59 sqq.

pears as the rule and norm of human conduct. The moral faculties of man, conscience, the consciousness of duty, and free-will, attain their full recognition and development.

The goal of moral conduct is the immediate possession of the triune God in the beatific vision and charity. God Himself is the beautiful and exemplar of all moral perfection,¹⁵ which can be attained by observing the law of charity, the great commandment that comprises love of God, oneself, and one's neighbor.¹⁶ Perfect charity, which excludes no one, not even one's enemies, constitutes the distinguishing mark of a disciple of Christ.¹⁷ To make obedience to the law easier, Christ, God in human form, invites all men to follow Him.¹⁸ Those who wish to reach the highest stage of moral perfection by the use of extraordinary means, are asked to give up all they have, renounce the world, and follow Him.¹⁹

Highly effective motives, such as the joys of Paradise, the torments of hell, a grateful love of

¹⁵ John XVII, 3; Matth. V, 48.

¹⁶ Matth. XXII, 36 sqq. Cfr. Koch-Preuss, *A Handbook of Moral Theology*, 5 vols., St. Louis, 1918 sqq., see especially Vol. IV, pp. 71 sqq.

¹⁷ John XIII, 34 sq.; Matth. V, 44.

¹⁸ John XIII, 15.

¹⁹ Matth. XIX, 21; Luke IX, 23. Cfr. Koch-Preuss, *A Handbook of Moral Theology*, Vol. I, pp. 236 sqq.

God and the Redeemer, the charm of a virtuous life, and the qualms of a wicked conscience incite the followers of Christ to lead a moral life.

3. Christian Worship

The worship of God inculcated by the Christian religion is an internal adoration of the Father in spirit and in truth; with all due regard, however, to external rites.²⁰ The centre of preaching and worship is the Person of the Godman. The constant renewal of His death in the Eucharist takes the place of the Old Testament sacrifices, of which the Mass is the fulfilment. In connection with it there are common prayer and the administration and use of the Sacraments as means of grace.²¹

Christian worship, dogma, and moral teaching form one harmonious whole. Worship is based on faith, which it serves to animate, and moves men to act in conformity with the moral law.

Thus, the religion of the New Testament occupies a unique place among the religions of the

²⁰ John IV, 23. Cfr. Koch-Preuss, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 191 sqq.

²¹ 1 Cor. I, 23; XI, 26; Luke XXII, 19; Matth. VI, 9 sqq.; XVIII, 20. Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *The Sacraments*, Vol. II, *The Holy Eucharist*, pp. 272 sqq.; Koch-Preuss, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 98 sqq.

world, transcending all others in sublimity and perfection. No other religion is so perfectly adapted to the dignity of God and to the needs of man. None other, not even that of the Old Testament, can boast of equal excellence. Consequently, the Christian religion cannot be a human invention, but must have a divine origin.

*B) Christ's Own Testimony to His Nature
and Mission*

To form a correct opinion of the Person, work, and doctrine of Jesus Christ, we must enquire what He Himself thought of His origin, nature, and mission. It is upon His testimony that the faith of His disciples and that of the Christian Church rests. Miracles and prophecies but serve to give that testimony external confirmation, though that confirmation is, of course, extremely valuable.

Christ's own testimony as to His nature and mission, together with the wisdom and holiness of His Person, constitute one of the external criteria of Christian revelation.

His enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, refused to accept His testimony. "Thou givest testimony of thyself," they said; "thy testimony

is not true.”²² But Christ insists that it *is* true. “Although I give testimony of myself,” he declares, “my testimony is true; for I know whence I came and whither I go.”²³ And in confirmation of His holiness and love of truth He asks: “Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me?”²⁴

Therefore, we are justified in employing Christ’s own testimony as an independent argument for the divine origin of the Christian religion.²⁵ That testimony is particularly valuable against those who, for fear of the supernatural, refuse to acknowledge miracles and prophecies as criteria of revelation.

Against this argument it will not do to quote Christ’s declaration: “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.”²⁶ No one will contend that a man’s testimony of himself, least of all that of the Godman, is *per se* untrustworthy.

²² John VIII, 13: “*Tu de te ipso testimonium perhibes, testimonium tuum non est verum.*”

²³ John VIII, 14: “*Si ego testimonium perhibeo de me ipso, verum est testimonium meum, quia scio unde veni, et quo vado.*”

²⁴ John VIII, 46: “*Quis ex vobis arguet me de peccato? Si veritatem dico vobis, quare non creditis mihi?*”

²⁵ A. Seitz (*Das Evangelium vom Gottessohn*, Freiburg, 1908, pp. 179 sqq.), asserts that this cannot be done; but his opinion is untenable.

²⁶ John V, 31.

Therefore, the words quoted cannot possibly have this meaning. They are not the expression of Christ's conviction, but that of His enemies, who unfairly interpreted the precept of Deuteronomy ²⁷ that every accusation before a court of law should be confirmed by at least two witnesses, in such wise as to make it seem a condemnation of His testimony of Himself. John VIII, 14 evidently renders the Master's opinion of His nature and mission most faithfully.

I. The Substance of Christ's Testimony of Himself

We assert that Christ's own testimony guarantees the divine origin of His teaching.

Standing before the people, in the presence of His disciples and the Sanhedrin, He declares Himself to be an *extraordinary ambassador of God*, nay, the consubstantial Son of God, and emphatically traces His teaching to divine revelation. This testimony is trustworthy, and, consequently, Jesus is an extraordinary ambassador of God, the consubstantial Son of God the Father, and His teaching is divine.

a) *Jesus Christ is an extraordinary ambassador or minister of God.* He was sent by the

²⁷ Deut. XIX, 15; cfr. John VIII, 17 sq.

Father to teach mankind: "For from God I proceeded and came; for I came not of myself, but he sent me."²⁸ "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. The things therefore that I speak, even as the Father said unto me, so do I speak."²⁹ "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth."³⁰

Christ is greater than the leaders of the Old Testament. He excels Abraham: "The Jews therefore said: . . . Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? . . . Jesus answered: . . . Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it and was glad. . . . Before Abraham was made, I am."³¹ He

²⁸ John VIII, 42: "*Ego enim ex Deo processi et veni, neque enim a me ipso veni, sed ille me misit.*"

²⁹ John XII, 49 sq.: "*Ego ex me ipso non sum locutus, sed qui misit me pater, ipse mihi mandatum dedit, quid dicam et quid loquar. Et scio, quia mandatum eius vita aeterna est. Quae ergo ego loquor, sicut dixit mihi pater, sic loquor.*"

³⁰ John XVIII, 37: "*Ego in hoc natus sum, et ad hoc veni in mundum, ut testimonium perhibeam veritati.*"

³¹ John VIII, 52-58: "*Dixerunt Iudaei: . . . Numquid tu maior es patre nostro Abraham, qui mortuus est? . . . Respondit Iesus: . . . Abraham pater vester exsultavit, ut videret diem meum, vidit et gavisus est . . . antequam Abraham fieret, ego sum.*" Cfr.

outranks Moses: "You have heard what it was said to them of old [through Moses] . . . but I say to you. . . ." ³² He is greater than Jonas and Solomon: "Behold a greater than Jonas here, . . . behold a greater than Solomon here." ³³ He ranks high above King David: "How then does David in spirit call him Lord, saying: The Lord saith to my Lord. . . . If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" ³⁴ He excels all created beings by His perfect knowledge of God: "All things are delivered to me by my Father. And no one knoweth the Son but the Father: neither doth any one know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him." ³⁵

b) *Jesus Christ is the consubstantial Son of God the Father.* The name "Son of God" is frequently used in Holy Scripture (twenty-

Pohle-Preuss, *God: His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes*, pp. 165 sqq.

³² Matth. V, 21-48: *Audistis, quia dictum est antiquis [per Moysen] . . . ego autem dico vobis,*" etc.

³³ Matth. XII, 41 sq.: *"Ecce, plus quam Ionas, . . . quam Salomon hic."*

³⁴ Matth. XXII, 43 sqq.: *"Quomodo ergo David in spiritu vocat eum dominum, dicens: dixit dominus domino meo . . . Si ergo David vocat eum dominum, quomodo filius eius est?"*

³⁵ Matth. XI, 27: *"Omnia mihi tradita sunt a Patre meo. Et nemo novit filium nisi Pater, neque Patrem quis novit nisi filius, et cui voluerit filius revelare."* Cfr. Luke X, 22; John I, 18.

nine times in all, nineteen times by the Synop-
tists and ten times by St. John). As it is some-
times applied to men,³⁶ *per se* no argument can
be drawn from it for the metaphysical divine
sonship of Christ..

Even more frequent than "Son of God" is the
name "Son of man." It is applied to Jesus sev-
enty-two times in the Synoptic Gospels and fif-
teen times in the Gospel of St. John. It is Christ's
usual way of referring to Himself. The name
"Son of man" is derived from Dan. VII, 13:
". . . in the vision of the night, . . . lo, one
like the son of man came with the clouds of
heaven." Coming with the clouds of heaven, in
Old Testament parlance, is a characteristic mark
of the deity, and, applied to the "Son of man,"
indicates His divine nature.³⁷

a) *Jesus Christ is the Son of the Heavenly
Father in a unique sense.* Whenever He refers

³⁶ Cfr. John I, 12.

³⁷ Cfr. Ps. CIII, 3; Is. XIX, 1. Cfr. A. E. J. Rawlinson (Prot.), *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, London, 1926, Ap-
pended Note III: "On the Meaning and Use of the Title 'Son of
Man' in the Gospels," pp. 242-250; F. Tillmann, *Der Menschen-
sohn. Jesu Selbstzeugnis für seine messianische Würde*, Freiburg
i. B., 1907,—a splendid monograph, of which Rawlinson (*ibid.*, p.
250, n. 4) says that, "despite the conservative presuppositions of
Roman Catholic biblical scholarship, it is a scientific and compe-
tent piece of work." On the concept "Son of Man" see J. Goetts-
berger, *Das Buch Daniel übersetzt und erklärt*, Bonn, 1928, pp.
54 sqq.

to the Father, He draws a distinction between Himself and the remainder of mankind, putting Himself on a higher level than the others: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."³⁸ "Thus therefore shall you pray: Our Father who art in heaven . . ." ³⁹ "Did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business?" ⁴⁰ "I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to your Father." ⁴¹

β) *He is consubstantial with, i. e., of the same substance or nature as the Father.* The Synoptic Gospels are usually said to contain no reference to the consubstantiality of Christ with God the Father; yet St. Matthew tells us that when He was adjured by the High Priest to tell if He were Christ, the Son of God, He answered: "Thou hast said it; nevertheless I say to you: hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right

³⁸ Matth. V, 48: "*Estote ergo vos perfecti, sicut et pater vester caelestis perfectus est.*"

³⁹ Matth. VI, 9: "*Sic ergo vos orabitis: Pater noster, qui es in caelis.*"

⁴⁰ Luke II, 49: "*Nesciebatis, quia in his, quae patris mei sunt, oportet me esse?*"

⁴¹ John XX, 17: "*Nondum ascendi ad patrem meum; vade autem ad fratres meos et dic eis: ascendo ad patrem meum et patrem vestrum.*" Cfr. A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, pp. 251 sqq.

hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”⁴² The High Priest in his question emphasized the phrase, “Son of God,” as can be clearly seen from the second part of Christ’s answer, in which He attributes divine dignity to the Son of man by saying that He will “come in the clouds of heaven,” and also from the report of St. Luke, according to which the first question, “If thou be the Christ, tell us,” was followed by a second, to wit: “Art thou then the Son of God?”⁴³—the reply to which entails His condemnation, as recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark.⁴⁴

The Jewish High Priest regarded Christ’s profession of His divine sonship as a blasphemy. This is explicable only if he understood Christ to represent Himself as the Son of God in the strict metaphysical sense of the term.

We have additional evidence for our thesis in the profession of St. Peter: “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,”⁴⁵ for which this

⁴² Matth. XXVI, 63 sq.; cfr. Mark XIV, 61 sq. “Thou hast said it” is a Hebraism equivalent to our: Yes, I am. And thus Röscher well renders it. So also Matth. XXVII, 11–12: Pilate: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered: Thou sayest it, *i. e.*, Yes, I am. And thus Röscher again translates it.

⁴³ Luke XXII, 66; 70; Matth. XVI, 16.

⁴⁴ Matth. XXVI, 65 sq.; Mark XIV, 63 sq.

⁴⁵ Matth. XVI, 16: “*Tu es Christus, Filius Dei vivi.*”

Apostle was called blessed by the Master.⁴⁶ What Peter proclaimed as his conviction, is thus recognized as the objective truth by Christ and attributed to divine inspiration: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven."⁴⁷

In the parallel passages—Mark VIII, 29 and Luke IX, 20—the expression "Son of God" is absent from the profession of St. Peter, whence some argue that this title is identical with Christ (or Messias) in the Gospel of St. Matthew and that it excludes consubstantiality with the Father, since the contemporaries of Our Lord did not conceive of the Messias as the metaphysical Son of God, *i. e.*, as true God.⁴⁸ Hence, they say, when Christ called Peter blessed because the truth which he professed had been revealed to him by the Father, He referred solely to His Messianic dignity, which was as yet unknown to the other Apostles, as their answer shows. We reply that neither in the Old nor in the New Testament was the title "Son of God" ever regarded as a synonym of, or included in, the Jewish term Messias.⁴⁹ In the Old

⁴⁶ Matth. XVI, 17.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ M. J. Lagrange, *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, Paris, 1909, p. 218.

⁴⁹ We purposely disregard 4 Esdr. VII, 28 and the parallels,

Testament the term "Son of God" (aside from Ps. II, 7, where it is merely mentioned in passing) does not occur at all as a name for the Messias. In the New Testament it is found in many passages, but, as in Ps. II, 7, always has a signification far transcending the purely human notion of the Jewish Messias. There is no doubt about this, so far as the second Psalm and the Apostolic writings are concerned; but it can also be demonstrated with regard to the Gospels. "Son of God" was not familiar to the contemporaries of Jesus as an appellation of the Messias.⁵⁰ The name was uttered by the angel who announced the birth of Christ,⁵¹ by the voice that came from heaven at His Baptism in the Jordan,⁵² and at the Transfiguration on Thabor,⁵³ by John the Baptist,⁵⁴ by the devil when he tempted our Saviour in the desert,⁵⁵ by divers

where the Messias is called (not consubstantial) "Son of God" (cfr. F. Tillmann, *Das Selbstbewusstsein des Gottessohnes*, 3rd ed., *Bibl. Zeitfragen*, 4. Folge, Heft 1½, Münster i. W., 1921, pp. 18 sqq.), since our opponents date this book about 70 A.D. (cfr. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. III, 4th ed., Leipzig, 1909, pp. 320 sqq.)

⁵⁰ Cfr. Lagrange, *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, pp. 213 sqq.

⁵¹ Luke I, 32, 35.

⁵² Matth. III, 17; Mark I, 11; Luke III, 22.

⁵³ Matth. XVII, 5; Mark IX, 7; Luke IX, 35.

⁵⁴ John I, 34; III, 35 sq.

⁵⁵ Matth. IV, 3, 6; Luke IV, 3, 9.

persons possessed of demons,⁵⁶ by some of the disciples,⁵⁷ by the members of the Sanhedrin,⁵⁸ and other enemies of Jesus,⁵⁹ and, finally, by Jesus Himself.⁶⁰ All those who applied the title "Son of God" to Jesus Christ owed their knowledge of this Messianic appellation partly to supernatural revelation (like John the Baptist, Nathanael, the devil, and the persons possessed by evil spirits), partly to definite utterances of Jesus Himself (like the disciples,⁶¹ Martha, the Sanhedrists and the other enemies of Jesus, perhaps also the demons). Hence, "Son of God" in the Gospels has the meaning which Christ and divine revelation attach to it. Christ's own view has been explained above. Revelation must necessarily agree with this view because the declaration of Christ, as we shall show further on, is true. Consequently, wherever Christ is called "Son of God" in the Gospels (including Matth. XVI, 16), the meaning is that He is of the same nature as the Father in Heaven. That the parallel passages to Matth. XVI, 16 do not contain the title "Son of God," is attributable to

⁵⁶ Matth. VIII, 29; Mark III, 11; V, 7; Luke IV, 41; VIII, 28.

⁵⁷ Matth. XIV, 33; XVI, 16; John I, 49; VI, 69 [?], XI, 27.

⁵⁸ Matth. XXVI, 63; Mark XIV, 61; Luke XXII, 70.

⁵⁹ Matth. XXVII, 40; 43; John XIX, 7.

⁶⁰ John IX, 35 [?]; X, 36; XI, 4.

⁶¹ Matth. XIV, 33.

the fact that SS. Mark and Luke, who wrote for pagan converts, unacquainted with the Jewish idea of the Messias, simply substituted for that term the Christian concept, which implies consubstantiality with the Father,⁶² and consequently, were in a position to omit the adjunct "*Filius Dei*" without incurring the danger of misunderstanding. St. Matthew, on the other hand, who wrote for converts from Judaism, in order to make his meaning clear and to prevent misconceptions, had to emphasize Christ's divine sonship.

More numerous than in the Synoptics are the texts affirming the divine sonship of Christ in the Gospel of St. John. This fact is easily explained in view of the peculiar purpose of the Fourth Gospel.

At the very beginning of the public life of the Redeemer we meet with Nathanael's implied profession: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God."⁶³ Jesus confirmed him in his belief and promised him that he would "see greater things" than he had already witnessed.⁶⁴

To those who persecuted Him because He

⁶² Cfr. Luke XXII, 66 sqq.

⁶³ John I, 49: "*Rabbi, tu es filius Dei.*"

⁶⁴ John I, 50: "*Quia dixi tibi: vidi te sub ficu, credis; maius his videbis.*"

cured the sick on the Sabbath, Jesus said: "My Father worketh until now, and I work."⁶⁵ As the Father works on the Sabbath, so also the Son. In other words, Jesus puts His activity on a level with that of God and asserts His consubstantiality with the Father. Hence, the Evangelist's comment: "Hereupon therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God."⁶⁶ And in order that no one might remain in doubt concerning the signification of His words, He solemnly reiterated His statement: "Amen, amen I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he [the Father] doth, these the Son also doth in like manner."⁶⁷

When the Jews came round and said to Him: "How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,"⁶⁸ Jesus

⁶⁵ John V, 17: "*Pater meus usque modo operatur, et ego operor.*"

⁶⁶ John V, 18: "*Propterea ergo magis quaerebant eum Iudaei interficere, quia non solum solvebat sabbatum, sed et patrem suum dicebat Deum, aequalem se faciens Deo.*"

⁶⁷ John V, 19: "*Amen, amen dico vobis: non potest filius a se facere quidquam, nisi quod viderit patrem facientem; quaecumque enim ille fecerit, haec et filius similiter facit.*"

⁶⁸ John X, 24: "*Quousque animam nostram tollis? Si tu es Christus, dic nobis palam.*"

replied among other things: "I and the Father are one."⁶⁹ The Jews regarded these words as blasphemous and picked up stones to kill him, justifying their conduct as follows: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."⁷⁰ Jesus answered that if the Scripture had the right to call the Old Testament Judges, who were simple representatives of Yahweh, "gods,"⁷¹ no one should take offence if He, who was the extraordinary ambassador of the Father, called Himself Son of God.⁷² He added that He would go farther and call Himself Son of God in the strict and proper sense of the term, and that He expected them to believe His words. But if they did not wish to believe His assurance that He was consubstantial with the Father, they should at least believe His works.⁷³

With equal clearness Jesus on a subsequent occasion affirmed His divine sonship: "He that believeth in me, doth not believe in me, but in him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth

⁶⁹ John X, 30: "*Ego et pater unum sumus.*"

⁷⁰ John X, 33: "*De bono opere non lapidamus te, sed de blasphemia, et quia tu, homo cum sis, facis teipsum Deum.*"

⁷¹ Cfr. Ps. LXXXI, 6.

⁷² John X, 34-36.

⁷³ John X, 38: "*Si mihi non vultis credere, operibus credite, ut cognoscatis et credatis, quia pater in me est et ego in patre.*"

him that sent me." ⁷⁴ And again: "Philip, he that seeth me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father [is] in me? The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself. But the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works." ⁷⁵ "All things whatsoever the Father hath, are mine." ⁷⁶ It is in the light of these utterances that we must interpret the accusation made against Jesus before Pilate: "We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." ⁷⁷ Only on the supposition that Christ had declared Himself to be the consubstantial Son of the Father, could He be charged with a crime subject to the death penalty under the law of Moses. ⁷⁸

c) *The teaching of Jesus was derived from divine revelation.* If Jesus was true God, then

⁷⁴ John XII, 44 sq.: "*Qui credit in me, non credit in me, sed in eum, qui misit me. Et qui videt me, videt eum, qui misit me.*"

⁷⁵ John XIV, 9 sq.: "*Philippe, qui videt me, videt et patrem. Quomodo tu dicis: Ostende nobis patrem? Non creditis, quia ego in patre, et pater in me est? Verba quae ego loquor vobis, a me ipso non loquor. Pater autem in me manens, ipse facit opera.*"

⁷⁶ John XVI, 15: "*Omnia quaecunque habet pater, mea sunt.*"

⁷⁷ John XIX, 7: "*Nos legem habemus et secundum legem debet mori, quia filium Dei se fecit.*" On the divine sonship of Christ see Pohle-Preuss, *The Divine Trinity*, pp. 49 sqq.

⁷⁸ Lev. XXIV, 16.

His teaching must necessarily be divine. He, moreover, repeatedly affirmed its divine character. When, for instance, the Jews marveled at the wisdom of His preaching, He said: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."⁷⁹

And upon another occasion: "He that sent me is true: and the things I have heard of him, these same I speak in the world. . . . I speak that which I have seen with my Father. . . . But now you seek to kill me, a man who have spoken the truth to you, which I have heard of God."⁸⁰

And: "For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak."⁸¹

And again: "The word which you have heard, is not mine, but the Father's who sent me."⁸²

And once more: "I have called you friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you."⁸³

⁷⁹ John VII, 16: "*Mea doctrina non est mea, sed eius qui misit me.*"

⁸⁰ John VIII, 26, 38, 40: "*Qui misit me verax est, et ego quae audiavi ab eo, haec loquor in mundo. . . . Ego quod vidi apud patrem meum loquor. . . . Nunc autem quaeritis me interficere hominem, qui veritatem vobis locutus sum, quam audiavi a Deo.*"

⁸¹ John XII, 49: "*Ego ex me ipso non sum locutus, sed qui misit me, pater. Ipse mihi mandatum dedit, quid dicam et quid loquar.*"

⁸² John XIV, 24: "*Sermonem, quem audistis, non est meus, sed eius, qui misit me, patris.*"

⁸³ John XV, 15: "*Vos autem dixi amicos, quia omnia, quaecumque audiavi a patre meo, nota feci vobis.*"—From a purely apolo-

2. The Truth of Christ's Testimony of Himself

The weight of the testimonies we have quoted depends upon their truth, and this in turn on the credibility of the witness. Since there is question here, not of external events, but of internal facts of self-consciousness, we shall have to establish the credibility of Christ by demonstrating that He was not deceived as to His Person, work, and mission, but able and willing to tell the truth.

a) *Christ was not deceived with regard to Himself, but knew the truth and therefore was able to tell it.*

Self-deception has its source either in the will or in the intellect. The will may deceive if it is blinded by pride, ambition, or success; the intellect, if it is unbalanced by disease. Neither the one nor the other abnormality can be shown to have existed in the case of our Saviour.

a) *Christ was not blinded by pride, ambition,*

getical point of view it is necessary to prove *only* the divine mission of Jesus. Since apologetics is concerned with the divine character of the religion instituted by Him, it is sufficient to prove *either* that He claimed to be sent by God to do this work *or* that He claimed that His teaching was of divine origin, and that one or other of these alternatives, or both if one wishes, are confirmed by miracles. His Divine Sonship need not be proved. It belongs to the context of revelation and is accepted with all the other doctrines, once the divine mission of Jesus is proved.

or success. He had not a vestige of vanity in Him. On the contrary, His life and teaching are a standing admonition to humility.⁸⁴ Nor was He ambitious and greedy of honors. The Messianic ideal of His contemporaries with its external pomp was foreign to His mind.⁸⁵ He did not seek the company of the rich and powerful, but preached with predilection to the poor.⁸⁶ When the people tried to crown Him, He "fled into the mountain himself alone,"⁸⁷ and when they paid homage to Him as their temporal ruler, He wept over their folly.⁸⁸

The success of His public career cannot possibly have awakened in Him the idea that He was the promised Messiah and the Son of God, for he regarded Himself as such from the very beginning.⁸⁹

β) *Christ's testimony of Himself did not originate in a diseased mind.* His case shows no signs of insanity. There are no indications at any time of fanatical exaltation, an unguarded

⁸⁴ Matth. XI, 29; XX, 28; Luke XXII, 25 sqq.; John XIII, 4 sqq.

⁸⁵ Luke XVII, 20.

⁸⁶ Luke IV, 18; VII, 22.

⁸⁷ John VI, 15.

⁸⁸ Luke XIX, 41 sqq.

⁸⁹ John I, 45 sqq.

imagination, or inconsistency of thought. On the contrary, His bearing is characterized by security and calm, all His words and actions testify to an extraordinary degree of prudence and wisdom. "He did not talk like an enthusiast and a fanatic, who sees only one red-hot spot, and so is blind to the world and all it contains. He is possessed of a quiet, uniform, collected demeanor, with everything directed to one goal. He never uses any ecstatic language, and the tone of stirring prophecy is rare. Entrusted with the greatest of all missions, his eye and ear are open to every impression of the life around Him—a proof of intensive calm and imperturbable security."⁹⁰

b) *Christ did not intend to deceive men, but wished to speak the truth.* If He had intended to deceive men concerning His Person, mission, and doctrine, His testimony of Himself would be sheer fraud, His entire public life would be one enormous outrage. What no one else ever dared to do, He would have been guilty of, namely, representing Himself falsely as God, unjustly claiming for Himself the highest veneration and love of men, and imposing His doc-

⁹⁰ A. von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, Leipsic, 1920, pp. 22 sq. (Engl. tr., *What Is Christianity?* pp. 30 sq.)

trines upon all under pain of eternal damnation. Had He been an impostor, we should have to regard Him—*sit venia verbo*—as the meanest scoundrel that ever lived.

In the light of the historical evidence nothing would be more unjustifiable than such a view of the Personality of Christ. Every page of the New Testament proves the contrary. Nowhere is it possible to discover a defect or even a moral weakness in the character of Christ. On the contrary, He is the very embodiment of holiness and virtue.

a) *Christ is sinless.* He challenges His bitterest enemies to convict Him of sin.⁹¹ Though they watched Him closely, they could find no guilt in Him. The High Priest and the Sanhedrin sought witnesses against Him, but were able to procure only two, whose testimony was manifestly false.⁹² Herod and Pilate declared Him innocent.⁹³ Judas committed suicide when he realized that he had betrayed an innocent man.⁹⁴ Paul, who first persecuted Him and then became His most ardent disciple, declared Him "holy,

⁹¹ John VIII, 46.

⁹² Matth. XXVI, 59-60; Mark XIV, 56: "*Multi enim testimoniam falsum dicebant adversus eum.*"

⁹³ Matth. XXVII, 24; Luke XXIII, 4, 14 sq.; John XVIII, 38.

⁹⁴ Matth. XXVII, 3 sqq.

innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." ⁹⁵

β) But Christ is not only sinless. *He is a sublime model of virtue and holiness.* He fulfils His duties towards God in a most perfect manner. To do the will of God is His food and drink, ⁹⁶ His rule of conduct even in the darkest hours of His life. ⁹⁷ He is "obedient unto death." ⁹⁸

He is equally perfect in His *intercourse with men.* Up to His thirtieth year He humbly obeys His parents. ⁹⁹ He loves His disciples, the sinners, the sick, ¹ His fellow-Jews, ² and all men in general. ³

Withal He is ever humble and modest, demands nothing for Himself, and regulates His conduct strictly according to the law. He begins His public career by a long and severe fast, ⁴ often retires for whole nights into the desert to

⁹⁵ Heb. VII, 26. On the sinlessness of Christ see Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, pp. 207 sqq.; L. Atzberger, *Die Unsündlichkeit Jesu*, Munich, 1883.

⁹⁶ John IV, 34.

⁹⁷ Luke XXII, 42.

⁹⁸ Phil. II, 8.

⁹⁹ Luke II, 51; III, 23.

¹ John XV, 13 sqq.; XVII, 11 sqq.; Acts X, 38; Luke XIX, 10; Matth. IV, 23; Luke VI, 17 sqq.

² Luke XIX, 41 sqq.

³ Matth. XXVIII, 19 sq.; John XII, 32; XVII, 20 sqq.

⁴ Matth. IV, 2.

pray,⁵ and has not enough property to be able to sleep under His own roof.⁶ He is greatest in suffering. Patiently and uncomplainingly He, the most innocent of mortals, bears bitter contumely and racking pains. At the moment of His death He utters a prayer for His enemies.

Thus Jesus Christ stands before us, unique, great, sublime, the beau ideal and exemplar of purity and virtue. To doubt His veracity, to denounce Him as a fraud, would be to destroy the credibility of human testimony. If Christ's testimony of Himself is unworthy of belief, no man can claim the confidence of his fellowmen. Veracity can have no adequate foundation in human nature if Christ was not morally perfect. To destroy faith in Him is to destroy faith in human testimony and to subvert the very basis of society.

Hence, we must insist that the testimony of Jesus is true and reliable. He was able to speak the truth and wished to speak it. His wisdom and holiness are our surest guaranty. We cannot reasonably doubt that He was an extraordinary ambassador of God, nay, the only-begotten consubstantial Son of the Father, and that His teaching was divine. And since that teaching is

⁵ Matth. XIV, 23; Mark I, 35; Luke VI, 12.

⁶ Matth. VIII, 20.

the foundation of the New Testament, the Christian religion is undoubtedly of divine origin.

Objections Refuted

The enemies of Christianity do not dare to denounce Christ as a deceiver, but in order to eliminate the superhuman, divine element from His career, they attack the credibility of His testimony by pointing to certain alleged pathological symptoms in His mental life. To make this theory appear less shocking, its advocates assert that many other great historical characters, *e. g.*, St. Paul, Cæsar, Muhammad, Napoleon, etc., were mentally abnormal. They admit that Christ was great, holy, wise, and normally sane, but assert that there were pathological elements in his character which go far towards explaining His success.⁷ What these writers call pathological is nothing else but the supernatural, divine element in the life of Christ. It is charged in particular that

1. His contemporaries regarded Him as mentally unsound. Even His relatives admitted

⁷ This is the contention of O. Holtzmann, *War Jesus Ekstasiker?* Tübingen and Leipsic, 1903; E. Rasmussen, *Jesus: eine vergleichende psychopathologische Studie*, Leipsic, 1905; de Loo-
sten, *Jesus vom Standpunkte des Psychiaters*, Bamberg, 1905; J.
Baumann, *Die Gemütsart Jesu*, Leipsic, 1908.

that He was insane at times,⁸ and the Pharisees held that He was possessed by the devil.

As regards the relatives of Jesus, it is not certain that the Evangelist's phrase, "they said" (*ελεγον*), is intended to apply to them. St. Mark's observation that the Scribes said He was possessed by Beelzebub, indicates that these words were spoken by the enemies of Jesus. However, it is possible that His relatives actually believed that He had lost His reason. Perhaps they were at first unable to explain on any other theory His sudden change of life and His public preaching after so many years of retirement. But they must have changed their minds before long, for we read that several of them became His disciples. The assertion of the Pharisees that Jesus was possessed by a devil was inspired by the false idea which the Jews generally entertained concerning the promised Messiah. It had become known that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, but since His humble appearance and His poverty did not agree with the idea which His contemporaries had formed of the Messiah as a political leader and a king, after the model of David, they regarded His Messianic consciousness as a figment of His im-

⁸ Mark III, 20 sq.

⁹ Mark III, 22; cfr. John X, 20.

gination and attributed it to insanity or diabolic possession.

2. *Jesus positively and definitely predicted that He would return "in the clouds, with great power and majesty,"*¹⁰ before the present generation had passed away,¹¹ before the Gospel had been preached in all the cities of Israel.¹² These predictions, we are told, are plain symptoms of an unbalanced mind, especially in view of the fact that they did not come true.

In order not to misunderstand Christ's prophecies regarding His return, we must distinguish in them two distinct and separate trains of thought. On one occasion He speaks of His return at the end of the world and says it will not take place until the Gospel has been preached to all nations and the Kingdom of God, in which good and bad exist side by side, is completed.¹³ No one knows the day or the hour when He will return. On another occasion Jesus speaks of His return as an event which many of His contemporaries will live to see. This proximate *parousia* of the Son of man began with His glorious Resurrection, mani-

¹⁰ Mark XIII, 26.

¹¹ Mark XIII, 30.

¹² Matth. X, 23.

¹³ Matth. XIII, 24-30, 37-43; Mark XIII, 10; Matth. XXIV, 14.

fested itself in the spiritual transformation of the Apostles on Pentecost, took visible shape in the divine judgment that overwhelmed the city of Jerusalem in the year 70, and will be concluded at the end of the world, when the Saviour will return in person to judge the living and the dead. Thus Christ's prophecy concerning His return has already been partly fulfilled and may not be treated as the product of an irresponsible mind.

3. The sharp words which Jesus employed against the Pharisees,¹⁴ the curse He pronounced upon the barren fig tree, and the violent measures He took against the money-changers in the Temple,¹⁵ are interpreted as *symptoms of nervous irritability and a disturbed soul life*. But the proceeding against the Pharisees and money-changers in the Temple loses the character of abnormality if we remember that the religious life of that time consisted almost wholly of external ceremonies, that even the worship of God was regarded as a mere business affair, that the Pharisees by their hypocritical conduct fooled the people and combated Jesus tooth and nail. This condition of affairs necessarily disturbed the mind of Jesus and filled Him with indigna-

¹⁴ Matth. XII, 34; XXIII, 13 sqq.; Mark VII, 6, 9.

¹⁵ Mark XI, 12-20.

ion and anger. For precisely that which He esteemed most highly, *viz.*: the interior life, sincerity and truthfulness in religion, was grossly disregarded, and the people were systematically deterred from the practice of these virtues. Christ's energetic measures against these abuses, therefore, are merely powerful manifestations of His moral conviction, which formed the sharpest possible contrast to the immoral conduct of the Pharisees and money-changers.

The *curse pronounced against the fig tree*, in view of the Master's usual kindness and moderation, must not be regarded simply as the result of an impatient and angry mood. The fig tree with its fruits occurs frequently in the sermons of Jesus as a symbol of human life, and no doubt His conduct on this occasion had a profound symbolical meaning. The curse pronounced against the barren tree was probably intended to point out the fate of the man who produces no fruit, *i. e.*, good works.

4. It is said that Jesus had *no respect for His parents* and did *not appreciate the advantages of family life*. As a twelve-year-old boy He remained in the Temple unknown to Mary and Joseph; ¹⁶ at the marriage feast of Cana He re-

¹⁶ Luke II, 41-51.

turned a harsh answer to His Mother;¹⁷ He treated His relatives coldly when they desired to speak to Him whilst He was addressing the people,¹⁸ and He showed little consideration for the feelings of those who wished to become His disciples.¹⁹ All these things are said to be obvious symptoms of an unsound mind.

In order to judge correctly *Christ's attitude toward His relatives, friends, and disciples*, we must bear in mind the purpose for which He had come into the world. His principal aim was to win humanity for the Kingdom of Heaven and the life beyond. This was the sublime object to which all His preaching and His whole activity was made subservient, and the work of accomplishing that object was so sacred to Him that everything else, including His intercourse with His nearest relatives, had to take second place. It was His wish that His disciples, too, should in all their doings be governed chiefly by the thought of the Heavenly Kingdom. Hence, His admonition to them to leave the burial of the dead and household cares to

¹⁷ John II, 4.

¹⁸ XII, 46 sqq.; Mark III, 32 sqq.; Luke VIII, 19 sqq.

¹⁹ Matth. VIII, 21 sq.; Luke IX, 59 sqq.

others ²⁰ and to devote themselves entirely to the service of God. This admonition is merely the practical application of the commandment: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." ²¹ Whatever harshness there may have been in His words and conduct was calculated to induce men, to whom the visible and material always appeals more strongly than the invisible and the spiritual, to turn their attention to "the one thing necessary." ²² This, too, is the meaning of the commandment to "hate" father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, life itself. ²³ That He did not employ the term "hate" in its strict sense, but merely to indicate a less degree of love, is evident in the light of the great central precept of charity and the parallel text Matth. X, 37. It is even more evident when understood in the light of the Hebrew (or Semitic) idiom: When two things of different value are compared with each other:

a) the better one is affirmed, "the inferior denied"; "*misericordiam volo et non sacrificium*" (Acts 5, 4); "*non est mentitus hominibus, sed Deo.*"

²⁰ Matth. VIII; Luke IX.

²¹ Matth. VI, 33.

²² Luke X, 42.

²³ Luke XIV, 26; John XII, 25.

b) the better one is loved, the lesser hated: "*Iacob dilexit Esau . . . vero odio habens,*" Jacob loved Rachel and hated Lea.

c) the better one is chosen, the lesser rejected, *e. g.* 1 Kings XVI, 7-10.

As regards the words which Christ spoke to His mother at the marriage feast of Cana, it is to be remarked that the Greek text does not sound nearly as harsh as the English, "Woman, what is that to me and to thee?"²⁴ The contemptuous connotation of our word "woman" in this context must not be transferred to the Aramaic original. Nevertheless, we are constrained to admit that the words quoted contain a refusal of Mary's request. As in the Temple, when He was only twelve years old, so again on this occasion, Christ sets up the will of His Heavenly Father against the wish of His earthly mother. Now that His public career as Messiah has begun, His mother no longer exercises a controlling influence over Him. This interpretation agrees with the immediately following words, which had best be couched in the form of a question, to wit: "Has not my hour come?"—that is to say, "You know very well that my hour, *i. e.*, the time of my Messianic ministry, has come, and I now have to be guided

²⁴ John II, 4.

solely by the will of my Father." This attitude fully explains His answer to His mother. Mary, intent upon helping the bridal couple through her intercession with her Son, misunderstands the second part of His answer and thinks He is about to comply with her petition; hence, her order to the waiters: "Whatever he shall say to you, do ye."²⁵ No lack of consideration and love for His mother can be found in the words of Jesus except by those who deny His divine nature and place Him on a level with ordinary mortals.

5. It is further alleged that *Jesus was subject to hallucinations and visions*, because St. Luke quotes Him as saying: "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven,"²⁶ and St. Matthew relates that when He was baptized by John in the Jordan, "he saw the spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon him," and heard "a voice from heaven saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."²⁷ Attention is also called to St. Mark's account of the Transfiguration.²⁸

It must be admitted that incidents like those

²⁵ John II, 5.

²⁶ Luke X, 18.

²⁷ Matth. III, 16 sq.; cfr. John I, 32 sqq.

²⁸ Mark IX, 2-9.

mentioned above may be the product of hallucination. But this does not by any means justify the conclusion that such is always the case. From the theistic point of view we have to reckon with the possibility of supernatural occurrences, *i. e.*, miracles. Everything depends on the account given of such an event. If trustworthy witnesses confirm its objective reality, we have no right to doubt it, even if it cannot be explained by natural means, as is the case here. The Evangelists report phenomena which (aside from the fall of Satan, which must no doubt be interpreted figuratively) were perceived not only by Jesus, but also by other witnesses. At Christ's Baptism, John saw the Holy Ghost descending in the form of a dove,²⁹ and Peter, James, and John at Christ's Transfiguration on the mountain beheld their Master glorified, with Moses and Elias at His side, and heard a voice out of the cloud saying: "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him."³⁰ Only dread of the supernatural and *a priori* disbelief in miracles can persuade one to assume hallucinations under such conditions.

6. As lunatics sometimes imagine they are guided by a strange power which eggs them on

²⁹ John I, 32.

³⁰ Mark IX, 6.

with irresistible force, so Jesus is said to have felt Himself dependent upon a *spirit*, which He conceived as a personal being. This spirit entered into relation with Him at His baptism,³¹ "remained upon him,"³² and drove him into the desert.³³ Jesus sighed³⁴ and rejoiced³⁵ in this spirit, and gave it back into the hands of His Father at death.³⁶

But the Greek word *πνεῦμα* not only means spirit (Holy Ghost), but also "soul." When the sacred writers say that the spirit descended upon Jesus, remained with Him, drove Him into the desert, and so forth, they refer to the Holy Ghost or the special divine guidance which Jesus enjoyed. He rejoiced in the Holy Ghost, in so far as His joy and the success of His disciples were attributable to the grace of the Holy Ghost. But when the sacred writers say that Jesus sighed in the spirit, or commended His spirit to the Father when He died, they plainly refer to His soul, its interior commotion³⁷ and

³¹ Matth. III, 16.

³² John I, 32.

³³ Mark I, 12.

³⁴ Mark VIII, 12.

³⁵ Luke X, 21.

³⁶ Luke XXIII, 46.

³⁷ Cfr. John XI, 38.

separation from the body. There is no reasonable motive for interpreting the respective Gospel texts differently.

7. Another defect which some of the higher critics pretend to have discovered in Christ, is *excessive egoism*. He regards Himself as the Redeemer who takes away the sins of the world.³⁸ He imagines He is the Messiah and the Son of God. He demands that men should love Him more dearly than their nearest relatives.³⁹ All these things, it is asserted, are symptoms of an abnormal egoism.

This theory would be well founded if the doctrines and claims of Christ were not fully guaranteed by His wisdom and sanctity. Since this is the case, however, there is no justification for speaking of exaggerated egoism. As the Messiah and the consubstantial Son of God, Jesus simply could not have spoken and acted differently than the Gospels tell us that He did.

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C) The Miracles of Christ

1. Christ employed miracles and prophecies not directly in order to demonstrate the divine origin of His doctrine, but to prove His divinity or the divine character of His mission as the teacher of mankind.⁴⁰ Once these truths are established, the divinity of His teaching follows as a matter of course.

2. In treating of His miracles and prophecies, we abstract for the nonce from His Resurrection, which, on account of its double importance as a miracle and a fulfilled prophecy, demands separate treatment.

3. We shall deal with the miracles of Christ

⁴⁰ Luke IV, 43.

not severally, one by one, but in their *ensemble*, paying attention mainly to those which He wrought Himself.

We assert that Christ demonstrated the divine character of His mission and teaching by means of miracles. We prove this thesis as follows:

Christ wrought true miracles and appealed to them as proofs of His divine mission. Now, miracles wrought under such conditions must be regarded as an immediate divine confirmation of the claims of the thaumaturgist. Therefore, Christ is a messenger sent by God, He is Himself true God, and His teaching is divine.

To establish this thesis we must demonstrate the historical, philosophical, and relative truth of the miracles of Christ; in other words, we must show the reality and the miraculous character of certain of His acts, and establish the fact that He appealed to them in confirmation of His mission.

I. The Historical Reality of the Extraordinary Deeds Performed by Christ

As regards quality, the miracles of Christ may be divided into two classes, *viz.*: (1) an-

thropological and (2) cosmological. Anthropological miracles are those which He wrought in connection with men; cosmological, those which He wrought in nature. The number of these miracles cannot be accurately ascertained, since the Evangelists often content themselves with a mere summary.⁴¹ Thirty-five miracles are described in detail. In twenty-three cases sick persons were miraculously restored to health (including seven possessed by demons), in three cases dead persons were recalled to life, and in seven cases the course of nature was affected.

The historical reality of these miracles is guaranteed by the Evangelists, whom we have shown to be trustworthy witnesses. The miracles recorded by them cannot be rejected as later interpolations, for they are intimately connected with the teaching of Christ and are woven, as it were, into the very texture of the Gospels.

The historicity of the miracles of Christ, according to the testimony of the Evangelists, was admitted even by His enemies.⁴²

⁴¹ Cfr. Matth. IV, 23 sq.; IX, 35; Mark I, 32 sqq.

⁴² Matth. IX, 34; XXVII, 42; Luke XXIII, 8; John XI, 47.

2. The Miraculous Character of the Extraordinary Deeds of Christ

The extraordinary deeds which we have just mentioned are genuine miracles, because they can be attributed neither to the forces of nature nor to the intervention of demons.

a) *They cannot be attributed to the forces of nature.* This applies first of all to

a) The cures which Christ wrought. The most various diseases, such as fever, leprosy, gout, paralysis, hemorrhages, blindness, dropsy, etc., are healed by a single word and a mere act of the will⁴³ or by His merely touching the patients, laying His hands upon them,⁴⁴ with which gesture He combined, in two instances, the application of spittle and water.⁴⁵

The actions accompanying the Saviour's words (laying on of hands, touching the patient, employing spittle and water) are altogether out of proportion to the miraculous effect and can no more explain that effect than the natural

⁴³ John IV, 46 sqq.; Mark II, 1 sqq. and the parallel passages; Mark III, 1 sqq.; Matth. VIII, 5 and IX, 20 sqq. and the parallel passages; John V, 2 sqq.; Luke XVII, 12 sqq.

⁴⁴ Mark I, 29 sqq. and the parallels; Mark I, 40 sqq. and the parallels; Matth. IX, 27 sqq.; Mark VIII, 22 sqq.; Luke XIV, 1 sqq.; Matth. XX, 29 sqq.; Luke XXII, 49 sqq.

⁴⁵ Mark VII, 32 sqq. and John IX, 1 sqq.

power of the human will and the words uttered by Jesus can explain it.

Our opponents point to the imposing personality of Jesus and represent the cures wrought by Him as the result of *hypnotic suggestion*. However, since suggestion can effect sudden cures only when the disease has its seat in the nervous system,⁴⁶ but is absolutely powerless where vital organs of the body are diseased, the miracles of Christ, wrought mostly in connection with cases of the last-mentioned kind, cannot be ascribed to hypnotism; this applies especially to those cures which were wrought at a distance.⁴⁷

The fact that Christ demanded faith of those whom He healed is cited as a proof that His cures were effected by means of suggestion. But He does not always demand an act of faith on the part of the patient;⁴⁸ sometimes He is satisfied with a profession of faith on the part of the relatives,⁴⁹ whence it may be inferred that faith was not a *conditio sine qua non* of the cure. Christ's usual demand that the sick whom He wished to heal should have faith in Him, probably had for its object to induce the patient to

⁴⁶ *V. supra*, pp. 118 sq. Cfr. Surbled-Eggemann, *Catholic Moral Teaching in its Relation to Medicine*, Vol. I, St. Louis, 1929.

⁴⁷ John IV, 46 sqq.; Matth. VIII, 5 sqq.

⁴⁸ Cfr. Mark I, 29 sqq., 40 sqq.; III, 1 sqq.; John V, 2 sqq.

⁴⁹ Matth. VIII, 5 sqq.; John IV, 46 sqq.

meditate on His Person and work, since the cures, like all the other miracles of Christ, were intended to confirm His divine mission. It was for this reason, too, that He wrought few or no miracles in places where this purpose could not be attained because of popular unbelief.

Some Rationalist critics assert that the men and women whom Christ cured were victims of hysteria and, consequently, these cures were not miracles at all. But there are no symptoms of hysteria recorded in the Gospels, and if we compare these persons with real victims of that curious disease, we find no resemblances, but many important differences. "The conduct of the persons cured by Christ," says a modern physician, "does not resemble that of patients afflicted with hysteria. Such persons like to approach great men; however, their object is not to be quickly cured, but to be treated by every possible method known to science, as they literally gloat over their disease. . . . The Master, after curing men, pays no more attention to them. Persons actually suffering from hysteria would probably have fallen into paroxysms and would have felt worse when they noticed this attitude. . . . Hysteric patients will rarely do the demonstrating physician the favor of letting him know that his treatment has benefited them, . . . and

whether the cure of any one symptom will prove permanent or even mark progress, and will not rather be supplanted by some new symptom of this most variable disease, no doctor can predict with safety.”⁵⁰ Hence it is plain that the persons cured by Jesus Christ cannot have been victims of hysteria, for neither their behavior nor the manner in which they were restored to health indicates that they suffered from this disease, and as Sacred Scripture says nothing on this head, there is no reason whatever for supposing that they were afflicted with it.

β) *The cures of persons possessed by a devil*⁵¹ are to be judged similarly. In all of these cases the Master healed the afflicted victim by commanding the evil spirit to leave him. This *modus procedendi* manifests superhuman power, since human authority *per se* is not able to influence the conduct of pure spirits. The necessity of postulating superhuman power remains, even if diabolic possession is denied and the condition of the sufferer is ascribed to lunacy, epilepsy, hysteria, or some other nervous trouble. For none of these diseases can be cured instantaneously by means of a mere command. Fur-

⁵⁰ K. Knur, *Christus Medicus?* Freiburg i. B., 1905, p. 28.

⁵¹ Matth. XII, 22 sq.; VIII, 28 sqq.; IX, 32 sqq.; XV, 21 sqq.; XVII, 14 sqq.; Mark I, 21 sqq.; Luke XIII, 10 sqq.

Furthermore, the cures wrought by Jesus must have been permanent, for had they been merely transient, His enemies, who were intent upon discrediting Him, would surely have made the most of the Master's failure.

γ) Besides healing many, *Jesus raised three persons to life*. The son of the widow of Naim⁵² and his friend Lazarus⁵³ he resuscitated by a mere oral command. The daughter of Jairus he took by the hand, whereupon she arose.⁵⁴ Human power cannot produce such marvelous effects by such inadequate means. In order not to be compelled to admit a miracle, our opponents either declare these three persons to have been not really, but only apparently, dead or wave the whole story aside as legendary. Both procedures are equally unjustified. The Jews may have been hasty in burying their dead, and this fact may have increased the danger of burying people alive, yet it would be attributing far too much to chance to assert, on the strength of this fact alone, that the three persons whom Jesus raised to life were not really dead. Nor are our opponents able to explain how a man like Lazarus, who had lain in his grave four days until he

⁵² Luke VII, 11 sqq.

⁵³ John XI, 1 sqq.

⁵⁴ Matth. IX, 18 sqq.

stank, could suddenly reappear alive and in perfect health.⁵⁵ Finally, it would be incompatible with the wisdom and holiness of Jesus to assume that He raised up persons who were not really dead, and then made the public believe that their resurrection was a proof of His Messiahship. One would rather have expected Him to warn His hearers against the danger of burying people before making sure that they were actually dead.⁵⁶

Those who regard the Gospel reports as mere legends, must, if they wish to be consistent, look upon all the miracles wrought by Christ, in fact upon all His works and words, nay, His very existence, as legendary and mythical. For the literary attestation is the same in all cases. Hence, we must either accept these occurrences as true miracles or deny that Jesus existed.

δ) The miracles wrought in connection with *nature* are also of a kind which transcends the natural powers known to us. Eight of them⁵⁷ were wrought by means of a simple command or, in the case of the multiplication of loaves,

⁵⁵ Cfr. Knur, *Christus Medicus?* p. 72.

⁵⁶ A. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, Tübingen, 1921, p. 54.

⁵⁷ Matth. VIII, 23 sqq.; XV, 29 sqq.; XVII, 23 sqq.; XXI, 18 sqq.; Luke V, 1 sqq.; John II, 1 sqq.; VI, 1 sqq.; XXI, 1 sqq.

by a blessing. It needs no argument to prove that the command or blessing of a mere man is not able to convert water into wine, to allay a storm, or to multiply bread. Where such effects are produced, a higher power is clearly at work.

In order to account for these phenomena without recourse to supernatural causes, our opponents try to explain them by purely natural means or represent them as mythical. But these attempts are vain in view of the plain text of the Gospels. Deception of the witnesses is excluded by the simple fact that these miracles represent easily perceptible events. Consequently, their supernatural character cannot be reasonably doubted.

To appeal to *Occultism* for an explanation of the miracles of Christ would be justifiable only if both the events themselves, as described by the Evangelists, and the manner in which they were caused, were manifestly occultistic phenomena. This, however, is decidedly *not* the case. As Bishop W. Schneider very truly observes: "The discoverers of the 'mediumship' of Christ took care to ignore those of His miracles which absolutely exclude comparison with the ordinary productions of Spiritistic mediums. They care not that He commanded the storms and walked upon the sea, that he fed thousands of people

with a few loaves and fishes, that He cured all sorts of sufferers, the blind and the deaf, and raised to life a corpse that had lain four days in the grave. Where and when did a Spiritistic medium ever perform such marvels? . . . Mediums are never sure of success, they make elaborate preparations, experiment, invoke their spirit 'controls,' fall into convulsions, and conduct themselves as the weak-minded tools of a strange power which not seldom acts blindly. The photographic views of Spiritistic *séances* often show the medium in a state of trance, with horribly distorted features and staring eyes. Christ does not form a chain; He makes no preparations; He does not operate tentatively; He is not dependent upon the influence of the climate in the use of His power; He does not enlist darkness or semi-darkness as an aid; He does not await the arrival of the spirit control, and does not fall into convulsions while the *séance* is on. . . . He always employs His own innate power, invariably foresees what is going to happen, and what He wills to do is done at once, even at a distance, upon His mere word."⁵⁸

⁵⁸ *Der neuere Geisterglaube*, 3rd ed., by F. Walter, Paderborn, 1913, pp. 257 sqq.; cfr. J. de Bonriot, S.J., *Wunder und Scheinwunder*, pp. 227-255.

b) *The miracles of Christ cannot be ascribed to evil spirits.*

a) Such an assumption underrates the acumen of Satan and his minions. Jesus directed His whole activity towards promoting the honor and glory of God and the salvation of men. One of His chief aims was to break the power of the devil. The purpose of His life, therefore, is diametrically opposed to the interests of the evil one, and, as a consequence, the latter certainly cannot have been inclined to aid his most dangerous enemy by secretly coöperating with Him. This is clearly indicated by the answer which Jesus gave to the Pharisees when they accused Him of casting out devils by the aid of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. "If Satan cast out Satan," he said, "he is divided against himself: how then shall his kingdom stand?" ⁵⁹

β) To assume that the miracles of Christ were wrought by the aid of evil spirits is incompatible with the sanctity of the Redeemer. He was all-holy, and to do the will of His Father was His daily bread, as it were. How could He have joined forces with God's deadliest enemy and appealed in confirmation of His divine mission to miracles wrought by the aid of the devil?

⁵⁹ Matth. XII, 26.

The very idea is too absurd to merit discussion.

γ) The hypothesis in question is equally incompatible with the veracity and wisdom of God, who could not possibly permit the devil to deceive the human race by means of pseudo-miracles. Christ expressly attributed the miracles which He wrought as the founder of a new religion to the spirit and power of God,⁶⁰ and appealed to them as proofs of His divine mission. Never before or since have miracles been accompanied by circumstances which pointed so unmistakably to a divine cause. If deception were possible here, we should have no criterion by which to establish the authenticity of any miracle.

3. Christ's Appeal to His Miracles

Christ, in confirmation of His divine mission, appealed partly to the *ensemble* of His miracles whose special purpose He mentioned.

a) Christ appealed to the *ensemble* of His miracles in a general way when the disciples of the Baptist came and asked Him: "Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?" He answered: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame

⁶⁰ Matth. XII, 28; John V, 36; X, 25, 37.

walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them.”⁶¹ The cures which He had wrought and the fact that He had raised dead men to life were a criterion by which John would be able to form a correct opinion of the Messiah. Jesus also points to the miraculous testimony given to Him by His Father in Heaven: “I have a greater testimony than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to perfect; the works themselves which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me.”⁶² And to the question: “How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,” He replies by saying: “I speak to you, and you believe not the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me. . . . Do you say of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I [am] in the Father.”⁶³ Similar expres-

⁶¹ Matth. XI, 3 sqq.

⁶² John V, 36.

⁶³ John X, 25, 36 sqq.

sions abound in the Fourth Gospel. For instance: "Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Otherwise believe for the very works' sake."⁶⁴ And again: "But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake: because they know not him that sent me. . . . If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father."⁶⁵

b) At times Jesus made a special appeal to certain particular miracles. Thus when He told the man sick of the palsy,⁶⁶ "Thy sins are forgiven thee," some of the Scribes said within themselves: "He blasphemeth." He healed the sick man to prove to them that He was endowed with divine power and therefore able to forgive sins. "But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then said he to the man sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house."⁶⁷ On another occasion⁶⁸ He raised Lazarus from the dead after He had publicly asked God for His assist-

⁶⁴ John XIV, 11 sq.

⁶⁵ John XV, 21 sqq.

⁶⁶ Matth. IX, 2 sqq.

⁶⁷ Matth. IX, 6.

⁶⁸ See John XI, 41 sqq.

ance and characterized the miracle which He was about to perform as a confirmation of His divine mission: "Because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." ⁶⁹

The disciples, too, regarded the miracles of Christ as proofs of His Messiahship and divine mission. "Many other signs also," says St. John,⁷⁰ "did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Even those who did not believe in Him were of the opinion that if the Christ came, he could not do more miracles than this man.⁷¹ Nicodemus voiced the conviction of many when he said: "Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him." ⁷²

The conclusion from all these considerations is that Christ effectively demonstrated the divine character of His mission and teaching by His miracles.

⁶⁹ John XI, 42.

⁷⁰ John XX, 30 sq.

⁷¹ John VII, 31.

⁷² John III, 2.

Objections Refuted

Our opponents assert that Christ Himself attributed no special importance to His miracles. They argue as follows:

1. Jesus censures those who ask miracles of Him. As a proof for this assertion we are referred to Matt. XII, 38 sq. with the parallel texts, and to John IV, 48. But in the former passage it is not so much the desire for miracles that evokes the Master's censure, as the wrong attitude of the Pharisees, who refused to accept the miraculous cure of the man possessed by the devil as a proof of the Messianic character of Jesus, and attempted to give it a different interpretation, in order that the people might not hail the wonder-worker as the promised Messiah.⁷³ Christ sharply rebuked them for this, and when they, who were not at all eager to know the truth, boldly demanded a spectacular demonstration of power ("a sign") He said: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign."⁷⁴ Still He does not deny their request, but promises, after spending three days and three nights in the grave, to arise from the dead to prove His divine mission.⁷⁵

⁷³ Matth. XII, 22 sqq.

⁷⁴ Matth. XII, 39.

⁷⁵ Matth. XII, 40.

The Master's indignant declaration: "Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not,"⁷⁶ is not to be interpreted as if He regarded His miracles as of small importance. What He wished to inculcate is that the faith which is satisfied with the teaching and testimony of Jesus is more perfect than that which requires to be propped up by miracles. He expressed Himself in a similar manner on another occasion, when He said: "If you will not believe me, believe my works."⁷⁷ These words also contain a rebuke. The Lord wishes to say: The testimony which I give of myself merits your belief; but if you will not accept it, you will at least have to accept the testimony which my Father gives of me by the miracles which He enables me to perform. These miracles, therefore, according to Christ's own declaration, so far from being purely ornamental, are the decisive factor in judging of His divine mission.

2. When He forbade the public announcement of His miracles,⁷⁸ Jesus was not moved by the thought that they were of no value in demonstrating His divine mission. This is evident from His repeated appeals to them. The

⁷⁶ John IV, 48.

⁷⁷ John X, 38.

⁷⁸ Matth. VIII, 4; IX, 30; Mark V, 43; VII, 36; VIII, 26.

prohibition referred to was intended as a means of preventing unnecessary excitement among the Jewish people, who cherished a political idea of the Messias. Jesus did not wish His Messiahship to be prematurely divulged, lest the people would start a riot, proclaim Him king,⁷⁹ and thus provoke the intervention of the Roman government. It was in the interest of His public ministry to avoid whatever might interfere with its success or bring it to an untimely end. Where this danger was excluded, as in the remote region of Gerasa, Jesus not only did not forbid, but positively commanded the people to spread the report of His miracles.⁸⁰

On the other hand, the prohibition in question was intended to be an admonition to the disciples to practice humility, especially if, as was to be foreseen, the people would disregard the Master's wish and spread the fame of His miracles.⁸¹ Jesus, who had proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount, "Do not your justice before men, to be seen by them," but give alms in secret, "otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven,"⁸² wished to show by

⁷⁹ Cfr. John VI, 14 sq.

⁸⁰ Luke VIII, 39.

⁸¹ Mark V, 43; Matth. IX, 26, 31; Mark VII, 36 sq.

⁸² Matth. VI, 1 sqq.

His own example how this doctrine was to be applied in practice.

Note on the Miracles of the Father

The miracles wrought by God the Father in favor of Jesus must be at least briefly rehearsed in this connection. They, too, were calculated to confirm the divine mission of the Saviour. Among these miracles are: the appearance of the angels at the birth of Christ,⁸³ the apparition of the miraculous star (miraculous at least in its movements),⁸⁴ the preservation of the Divine Infant against the wiles of Herod,⁸⁵ the voice from heaven at Christ's Baptism in the Jordan,⁸⁶ at the Transfiguration on the Mountain, and after His triumphant entry into Jerusalem,⁸⁷ and the extraordinary occurrences at His death.⁸⁸ All these events, which are as solidly attested as the miracles wrought by Christ Himself, were of divine origin and cannot be explained by natural means or as diabolic deception, and consequently form a direct divine attestation of Christ's Messianic mission.

⁸³ Luke II, 9 sqq.

⁸⁴ Matth. II, 2.

⁸⁵ Matth. II, 13.

⁸⁶ Matth. III, 16 sq.

⁸⁷ Matth. XVII, 5; John XII, 28 sq.

⁸⁸ Matth. XXVII, 51 sq.

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D) The Prophecies of Christ

a) The prophecies of Christ have for their objects: (1) His own Person, (2) the fate of His disciples and that of the Jewish nation, (3) the preaching of the Gospel, (4) the development and duration of the Church, and (5) the end of the world. But not all of these prophecies can be utilized as proofs for our present purpose. Some of them have not yet been fulfilled; others, which occur in a similar form in the Old Testament, cannot be traced with certainty to Christ; others, again, are too vague and indefinite.

Hence, we may not appeal to the prophecies concerning the end of the world and the imperishability of the Church, for they have not yet been fulfilled. The prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, of Christ's death on the Cross, and the flight of the Apostles, must also be omitted in this connection because they are already contained in the writings of the Old Testament. The same

rule applies to the signs portending the destruction of Jerusalem, because it is not indicated with sufficient clearness whether they are to be applied to that catastrophe or to the end of the world.⁸⁹

b) As in the case of Christ's miracles, so also in the case of His prophecies, we have to demonstrate their historical, philosophical, and relative truth and reality. We must show that Christ actually predicted future events and that His predictions came true; that He could not possibly have foreseen these events by purely natural means, and that He employed prophecy to prove His divine mission.

We maintain that Christ proved His divine mission and the divine origin of His teaching by prophecies which actually came true.

Christ predicted future events, which really happened later on, and which He could not possibly have foreknown by purely natural means, and He appealed to these prophecies as incontrovertible proofs of His divine mission. Prophecies made under such conditions must be regarded as an immediate divine confirmation of the words of him who makes them. Therefore,

⁸⁹ Cfr. J. Knabenbauer, S.J., *Comment. in Matth.*, Paris, 1893, Part II, pp. 309 sq.

Christ was an ambassador of God, Himself true God, and His doctrine is divine.

I. The Historicity of the Prophecies of Christ

a) Christ predicted future events in reference (α) to Himself, (β) to His disciples, and (γ) to the destruction of Jerusalem and the fate of the Jewish nation.

a) *Christ predicted future events in reference to Himself.* Thus He described *in detail* the circumstances of His Passion and death: "He began to tell them the things that should befall him, saying: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall condemn him to death and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock him, and spit on him, and scourge him, and kill him: and the third day he shall rise again."⁹⁰ The prophets of the Old Testament advert to the violent death of the Messiah and the manner in which he was to be executed, but *the details*—that He was to be surrendered to, and condemned to death by, the Sanhedrin, that He was to be handed over to the gentiles, who would

⁹⁰ Mark X, 32 sqq.; cfr. Matth. XX, 18 sq.; Luke XVIII, 32 sq.

mock, scourge, and crucify him, and that He would arise again from the dead on the third day,—are not found in the Old Testament.

β) *Christ predicted future events in reference to His disciples.* On the night before His Passion He foretold that Judas would betray Him: "And whilst they were eating, he said: Amen I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me. . . . And Judas that betrayed him, answering, said: Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him: Thou hast said it."⁹¹ Soon afterwards He predicted that Peter would deny Him: "Jesus said to him [Peter]: Amen I say to thee, that in this night before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice."⁹² On the day of His Ascension into Heaven He told His Apostles that within a few days they would be inspired by the descent of the Holy Ghost with fresh courage and strength for the preaching of the Gospel: "And eating together with them, he commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you

⁹¹ Matth. XXVI, 21 sqq.: "*Edentibus illis dixit: Amen dico vobis, quia unus vestrum me traditurus est. . . . Respondens autem Iudas, qui tradidit eum, dixit: Numquid ego sum, Rabbi? Ait illi: Tu dixisti.*" (Cfr. John XIII, 21 sqq.)

⁹² Matth. XXVI, 34: "*Ait illi [Petro] Iesus: Amen dico tibi, quia in hac nocte, antequam gallus cantet, ter me negabis.*" (Cfr. Mark XIV, 30).

have heard (saith he) by my mouth. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. . . . You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth.”⁹³ The first two of these prophecies were entirely new, whilst the third, though contained substantially in the Book of Joel,⁹⁴ is more clearly defined by the statement that the Holy Ghost will descend upon the Apostles shortly after the Ascension.

γ) *Christ predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish nation.* These events had already been foretold by Daniel;⁹⁵ but the prophecy is developed in more than one respect by Jesus, who describes the siege and destruction of the city with considerable detail: “Thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten

⁹³ Acts I, 4 sqq.: “*Et convalescens praecepit eis, ab Ierosolymis ne discederent, sed expectarent promissionem Patris, quam audistis (inquit) per os meum: quia Ioannes quidem baptizavit aqua, vos autem baptizabimini Spiritu sancto non post multos hos dies . . . accipietis virtutem supervenientis Spiritus sancti in vos, et eritis mihi testes in Ierusalem et in omni Iudaea et Samaria et usque ad ultimum terrae.*” (Cfr. Luke XXIV, 49.)

⁹⁴ Joel II, 28 sq.

⁹⁵ Dan. IX, 26 sq.

thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee.”⁹⁶ “There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people; and they shall fall by the edge of the sword.”⁹⁷ City and Temple will be completely destroyed: “And they shall not leave in thee [Jerusalem] a stone upon a stone.”⁹⁸ “Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone, that shall not be thrown down.”⁹⁹ The Jewish people will be dispersed throughout the world, and Jerusalem will no longer be the capital of their country. “They shall be led away captives into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the gentiles; till the times of the nations be fulfilled.”¹ The time when all this is to happen is clearly indicated: “This generation shall not pass, till all these things be done,”² that is, with-

⁹⁶ Luke XIX, 43 sq.: “*Circumdabunt te inimici tui vallo . . . coangustabunt te undique et ad terram prosternent te et filios tuos qui in te sunt.*”

⁹⁷ Luke XXI, 23 sq.: “*Erit enim pressura magna super terram et ira populo huic. Et cadent in ore gladii.*”

⁹⁸ Luke XIX, 44: “*Non relinquent in te [Ierusalem] lapidem super lapidem.*”

⁹⁹ Mark XIII, 2: “*Vides has omnes magnas aedificationes [sc. templi]? Non relinquetur lapis super lapidem, qui non destruat.*”

¹ Luke XXI, 24: “*Captivi ducentur in omnes gentes et Ierusalem calcabitur a gentibus, donec impleantur tempora nationum.*”

² Matth. XXIV, 34: “*Non praeteribit generatio haec, donec omnia haec fiant.*” (Cfr. Mark XIII, 30; Luke XXI, 32.)

in the span of one generation of men, *i. e.*, in from thirty to forty years, all these things will come to pass; many of the present generation will live to witness them.³

b) *All the prophecies of Christ have been fulfilled*, (α) those that concerned His Person as well as (β) those that referred to His disciples and (γ) to the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews.

α) As the history of the Passion is well known to all, we will only refer to the account in Matth. XXVI, 57-68 and XXVII, 1-31, and the parallel passages.

β) All four Evangelists report the betrayal

³ That the term *generatio* ($\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$) means all those now living, and not the Jewish nation, may be deduced from the fact that it could not be said of the Jewish nation, whose existence at the time of its being led into captivity is a matter of course, with such emphasis that it would live to see the destruction of Jerusalem, or that it would continue to exist to the end of the world, since the context in no wise intimates that the end of the world is still far away, which, if the continued existence of the Jewish nation were to be such a remarkable phenomenon, would have to be presupposed. On the other hand, that which the present generation was to see could not have been the end of the world, since the date of that event, which, according to Christ's own teaching (Matth. XXIV, 36; Mark XIII, 32), is known to no one but the Father, is pretty definitely indicated (up to within a period of from 30 to 40 years) in the prophecy here under consideration. Hence the sense of the passage can only be: "Within a generation, *i. e.*, within the lifetime of a human being, the city and the temple will be destroyed and the people led into captivity."

of the Master by Judas and His denial by Peter.⁴ The descent of the Holy Ghost is related in the Acts of the Apostles.⁵

γ) We read in the History of the Jewish War by Flavius Josephus⁶ that Titus surrounded the city of Jerusalem with a stone wall in order to force the inhabitants to surrender. Tacitus confirms this report.⁷ The terrible consequences of the siege are thus described by Josephus: "During the entire time of the siege 1,100,000 human beings lost their lives. Of these the great majority was descended from the same people, but did not come from the same region. For those who had convened from all parts of the country to celebrate the Pasch, were suddenly surrounded by war, so that in consequence of the crowding of the city, first the plague and soon after famine broke out among them."⁸ The Roman generals had decided in council to spare the Temple,⁹ but an undisciplined soldier threw a burning torch into it, and it went up in flames.¹⁰ The charred foundations were de-

⁴ Cfr. Matth. XXVI, 47-50, 60-75, and the parallel passages.

⁵ Acts II, 1-21.

⁶ *De Bello Iudaico*, V, 12, 1-2.

⁷ *Hist.*, V, 13: "*Hanc adversum urbem gentemque Cæsar Tiberius aggeribus vineisque certare statuit.*"

⁸ *De Bello Iudaico*, VI, 9, 3.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, VI, 4, 3.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, VI, 4, 4-6.

stroyed by an earthquake and a fire under Julian the Apostate, who had incited the Jews to rebuild the Temple. The church historian Socrates says on this head: "Julian . . . commanded the Temple of Solomon to be restored . . . In a short time everything necessary for the building had been brought together, when . . . a severe earthquake happened at night, which loosened the stones of the ancient temple foundation, raised them out of the ground, and dispersed them with those of the adjoining buildings."¹¹ This agrees with the description given by Ammianus Marcellinus, a secular historian, who says: "He [Julian] proposed to rebuild at a vast expense the once magnificent temple of Jerusalem, which after many deadly contests was with difficulty taken by Vespasian and Titus, who succeeded his father in the conduct of the siege. And he assigned the task to Alypius of Antioch. . . . But though Alypius applied himself vigorously to the work, and though the governor of the province co-operated with him, fearful balls of fire burst forth with continual eruptions close to the foundations, burning several of the workmen and making the spot

¹¹ *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 20 (Migne, *P.G.*, LXVII, 429). On Julian the Apostate see the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII, pp. 558 sq.; P. Allard, *Julien l'Apostat*, 3 vols., Paris, 1900-1902.

altogether inaccessible; and thus the very elements, as if by some fate, repelling the attempt, it was laid aside." ¹²

Of the destruction of the city Josephus says: ". . . Cæsar commanded them [the soldiers] completely to destroy the whole city and the Temple." ¹³ Only the three towers of the Palace of Herod were to remain standing as monuments of the ancient fortifications and the western part of the city wall for the protection of the remaining garrison. "The entire city was leveled to the ground by the destroyers, so much so that a later visitor could hardly have believed that it was ever inhabited." Of those who survived the fall of Jerusalem many were led captive to Egypt, others were destined for the gladiatorial combats or the triumphal march of the victors, still others were sold into slavery. ¹⁴ Those

¹² *Rer. Gest.*, XXIII, 1, 2, and 3 (ed. Gardthausen, Leipsic, 1874, I, 307 sq.): "*Templum, quod post multa et interneciva certamina obsidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito aegre est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus cogitabat [Iulianus] immodicis, negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochensi. . . . Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius iuvaretque provinciae rector, metuendi globi flammaram prope fundamenta crebris adsultibus erumpentes fecere locum exustis aliquotiens operantibus inaccessum, hocque modo elemento destinatus repellente cessavit inceptum.*" (C. D. Yonge, *The Roman History of Ammianus Marcellinus*, London, 1862, p. 317.)

¹³ *De Bello Iudaico*, VII, 1, 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, VI, 9, 2.

who remained in Palestine revolted under the Emperor Hadrian, but were again defeated and dispersed all over the earth. Jerusalem itself was rebuilt by Hadrian and called Aelia Capitolina (the Arabs sometimes still call it Iliah).¹⁵

That Christ's prophecy in regard to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem was accurately fulfilled may be gathered from the fact that the city was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A. D., forty years after the Saviour had predicted its fate. There can be no doubt that many of His contemporaries were still alive when the Jewish capital fell.

2. The Supernatural Character of the Prophecies of Christ

From what we have said it is plain that Christ clearly and definitely foretold events which depended wholly upon the free will of God and of men. He could not have foreknown these things by natural means, since the prophecies involved many details that could not have been inferred with certainty by a created intelligence from the habits and customs of men (as the

¹⁵ Cfr. Dio Cassius, *Hist. Rom.*, LXIX, 12, 14; Th. Granderath, S.J., "*Die Trümmer des israelitischen Volkes als Zeugen für den göttlichen Ursprung des Christentums*" in the *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, Vol. XVII, pp. 42 sqq.

manner of His condemnation or the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the city and the Temple), or from the character of the individuals concerned (as the denial of Peter or the betrayal of Judas), or from the ordinary operation of Divine Providence (as the descent of the Holy Ghost). Consequently, the prophecies of Christ were the result of supernatural, divine revelation.

3. Christ's Appeal to His Prophecies

Christ frequently appealed to His prophecies as proofs of His divine mission.

a) In general He appealed to His prophecies by pointing to the "works" (ἔργα) which the Father had commissioned Him to perform: "The works which the Father hath given me to perfect; the works themselves, which I do, give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me."¹⁶ To these "works," by which the Father alone¹⁷ gives testimony of Christ's divine mission, belong by their very nature the prophecies no less than the miracles.

b) In predicting His betrayal by Judas, Jesus

¹⁶ John V, 36: "*Opera, quae dedit mihi pater, ut perficiam ea, ipsa opera, quas ego facio, testimonium perhibent de me, quia pater misit me.*"

¹⁷ Cfr. John V, 20; X, 25, 37, 38.

emphasized the fact that this prophecy had for its object the confirmation of His divine mission: "At present I tell you, before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe that I am he," *i. e.*, he whom I have always declared myself to be, namely, the Messiah, the Son of God.¹⁸

Thus the chain of argument is complete: Christ appealed to genuine and accurately fulfilled prophecies, which could have originated only with God, in confirmation of His divine mission and doctrine. This appeal includes the positive testimony of God in favor of Christ. Now, since God in His holiness and veracity can testify only to the truth, there can be no doubt that Jesus was sent by God and that His teaching is divine.

E) The Resurrection of Christ

The Resurrection of Christ was a miracle as well as a prophecy, and in both respects is the most effective proof of the divine character of His mission and teaching, constituting, as it were, the seal of divinity impressed upon Christianity by its Founder. He Himself attributed

¹⁸ John XIII, 19: "*Amodo dico vobis priusquam fiat, ut cum factum fuerit, credatis quia ego sum [sc. ille, quem me esse semper dicebam, i. e., Messias, Filius Dei].*"

this signification to His Resurrection when He promised His opponents, who had demanded a decisive sign of His Messiahship, that He would arise three days after His death.¹⁹ The Apostles take the same view. St. Paul regards the Resurrection as the groundwork of the Apostolic preaching and of the Christian faith. "If Christ be not risen again," he writes to the Corinthians, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."²⁰ Of the other Apostles St. Luke says: "With great power did the Apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord."²¹

Nor has it escaped the attention of our enemies that the Resurrection of Christ is the pillar of the Christian faith. "The centre of the centre," says Strauss, "the very heart of Christianity, is the Resurrection of Jesus."²² Hence, they have left no means untried to divest the Resurrection of its supernatural character. To succeed in this, they had to adopt one of two ways: they had either to demonstrate that Christ did not actually

¹⁹ Matth. XII, 39 sq.

²⁰ 1 Cor. XV, 14: "*Si autem Christus non resurrexit, inanis est ergo praedicatio nostra, inanis est et fides vestra.*"

²¹ Acts IV, 33: "*Virtute magna reddebant Apostoli testimonium resurrectionis Iesu Christi domini nostri.*"

²² "*Den Mittelpunkt des Mittelpunktes, das eigentliche Herz des Christentums bildet die Auferstehung Jesu.*" (*Die Halben und die Ganzen*, Berlin, 1865, p. 125).

die, but was buried alive and reawoke in the tomb; or to show that He died, but never rose again, and that what is reported concerning His miraculous Resurrection is attributable to fraud or imagination.

Therefore, it is necessary to prove, first, that Christ really and truly died and, secondly, that He really and truly arose from the dead.

We shall treat of the Resurrection first as a miracle and secondly as the object of a prophecy, and employ the same method of argumentation as above, showing that the Resurrection was real, that it was supernatural in character, and that Christ employed it as an argument to prove His divine mission.

We assert, first of all, that Christ proved the divine character of His mission and doctrine by his Resurrection.

I. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AS A MIRACLE

A. The Historicity of the Resurrection

1. The reality of the death of Christ is proved to evidence:

a) By the unanimous *testimony of all four Evangelists*. St. John reports as an eye-witness:

"Jesus therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated; and bowing his head, he gave up the ghost."²³

b) By the *conduct of the Roman officials* present at the crucifixion. The soldiers had received orders to break the legs of Jesus and of the two robbers who had been crucified with Him, in order that their death might be hastened and the bodies taken away before the Sabbath. They broke the legs of the two robbers, but when they saw that Jesus had expired, they did not break his legs—this cruel procedure (*crurifragium*) partook of the nature of a punishment—but to make sure that he was dead, one of the soldiers "opened his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water."²⁴ If Jesus had not been dead when His side was opened, the wound made by the lance would surely have caused His death, since it was so deep that the Apostle Thomas was able to lay his hand into it after the Resurrection.²⁵ Moreover, the disintegration of the blood into

²³ John XIX, 30: "*Inclinato capite tradidit spiritum.*" (Cfr. Matth. XXVII, 50; Mark XV, 37; Luke XXIII, 46).

²⁴ John XIX, 33 sq.: "*Ad Iesum autem cum venissent, ut viderunt eum iam mortuum, non fregerunt eius crura, sed unus militum lancea latus eius aperuit, et continuo exivit sanguis et aqua.*"

²⁵ John XX, 25-27.

serum and placentum showed that Jesus was really dead.²⁶

The fact of His death is attested by the official report of the centurion who was present at the crucifixion. "Pilate marvelled that he [Jesus] should be already dead. And he sent for the centurion and asked him whether he were already dead. And on being informed by the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph [of Arimathea]." ²⁷ Pilate's doubt as to whether Jesus was already dead is easily explained. For only a short while before the arrival of Joseph ²⁸ the Jews, supposing all three of the crucified men to be still alive, had asked him for permission to break their bones.²⁹

c) The reality of Christ's death is further proved by the behavior both of His friends and of His enemies. His friends, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and the women of Galilee, embalmed and buried the body according to Jewish custom.³⁰ They would surely not have done this if there had been any reasonable doubt

²⁶ Cfr. J. E. Belser, *History of the Passion*, tr. by F. A. Marks, ed. by A. Preuss, St. Louis, 1929, pp. 473 sqq.

²⁷ Mark XV, 44 sq.

²⁸ John XIX, 38.

²⁹ John XIX, 31; cfr. Belser, *op. cit.*, pp. 550 sqq.

³⁰ John XIX, 40.

as to whether Jesus was dead. The binding of the limbs with the linen cloths, with a hundred pounds of strongly smelling myrrh and aloes,³¹ and its burial in a narrow tomb closed by a stone slab,³² far from reviving Jesus (if He had not been really dead), would inevitably have led to His death by suffocation.

How firmly the disciples were convinced that their Master was dead, is evidenced by the fact that, when they heard of His Resurrection, they refused to believe what they denounced as "idle tales."³³

The enemies asked Pilate for a death-watch on the supposition that Jesus was really dead: "Sir, we have remembered, that the seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again."³⁴ They were inspired by the same conviction when they permitted the corpse to be taken from the cross and buried, and when they circulated the rumor that His disciples had stolen the body while the guards were asleep.³⁵

2. *The reality of the Resurrection* can be shown: (a) from the character of the witnesses

³¹ John XIX, 39.

³² Matth. XXVII, 60; John XIX, 40.

³³ Luke XXIV, 11.

³⁴ Matth. XXVII, 63: "*Recordati sumus, quia seductor ille dixit adhuc vivens: post tres dies resurgam.*"

³⁵ Matth. XXVIII, 13.

who attest it and (b) from the nature of their testimony.

a) *The Witnesses*.—The Resurrection of Christ is reported by the four Evangelists and by St. Paul,—all witnesses whose credibility we have established in a previous chapter of this treatise. To understand their accounts correctly, however, it is necessary to keep in mind the object for which they wrote.

St. Paul, who, as modern critics concede, has the right to be heard first because he gives us the earliest report on the subject, opposes those who deny the resurrection of the dead in general and especially the Resurrection of Christ.³⁶ His chief concern is to quote only official witnesses of the event. Therefore he cites Cephas (Peter) and the Twelve;³⁷ the five hundred brethren who had seen the risen Lord and many of whom were still alive; St. James, and finally himself.³⁸ He omits the testimony of the women, apparently for the reason that the Corinthians, to whom he was writing, would not have attached any importance to it.³⁹

St. Matthew writes with the intention of re-

³⁶ I Cor. XV.

³⁷ I Cor. XV, 3-5.

³⁸ I Cor. XV, 6-8.

³⁹ Cfr. Belser, *op. cit.*, pp. . . sq.; J. B. Disteldorf, *Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi*, Treves, 1906, pp. 40 sq.

futing the lie, invented and set afoot by the Jews, that the disciples had stolen the body of Christ. With this purpose in mind he shows that it was not the men of Christ's circle of adherents, but the women who went to the tomb, which was sealed and watched by guardians, and that it was these women who first saw the risen Lord after the Resurrection.⁴⁰ He further explains that the lie in question was invented by the members of the Sanhedrin in a desperate effort to conceal the facts. Besides the apparition of the risen Lord to the women, St. Matthew mentions only one other, which occurred later in Galilee; this was in harmony with the general plan of his Gospel, which was mainly to give an account of the activities of Jesus in Galilee.⁴¹

St. Mark in his account of the Resurrection emphasizes the fact that the disciples were by no means credulous, but were led to believe in the Resurrection of Jesus only gradually and on the strength of incontrovertible evidence.⁴² He mentions three apparitions of the risen Saviour: one to Mary Magdalen on the morning of the Resurrection,⁴³ one to the disciples on the way

⁴⁰ Matth. XXVIII, 9-10.

⁴¹ Matth. XXVIII, 16 sqq.; cfr. Belser, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

⁴² Mark XVI, 11-14.

⁴³ Mark XVI, 9-11.

to Emmaus the same day,⁴⁴ and one in Galilee.⁴⁵

St. Luke writes for Gentile converts, to confirm them in their belief in the Resurrection of Christ, with special reference to the denial of the resurrection of the body current among the pagans, and to overcome any doubts that might possibly arise among the Christians themselves. For this reason he adduces a larger number of witnesses than the other two Synoptists, lays greater stress upon the fact that the disciples were not unduly credulous, and also recalls that Christ Himself demonstrated the necessity of His Resurrection from the prophecies of the Old Testament. He reports four apparitions of the risen Saviour, all of which took place in Judea: the first to St. Peter,⁴⁶ the second to the disciples at Emmaus,⁴⁷ the third and fourth to the Apostles on the eve of the Resurrection⁴⁸ and on the day of the Ascension of Christ.⁴⁹

St. John, whose Gospel was chiefly intended to confirm belief in the divinity of Christ,⁵⁰ treats of the Resurrection mainly from this

⁴⁴ Mark XVI, 12 sq.

⁴⁵ Mark XVI, 15-18; cfr. Matth. XXVIII, 16-20.

⁴⁶ Luke XXIV, 34.

⁴⁷ Luke XXIV, 15-31.

⁴⁸ Luke XXIV, 36-43.

⁴⁹ Luke XXIV, 44-51.

⁵⁰ John XX, 30 sq.

special point of view. He shows that the Resurrection was the greatest of all the miracles wrought by Jesus to perfect the faith of His followers.⁵¹ He devotes particular care to the description of those features which show the substantial identity of the risen body with that of Christ before the Resurrection.⁵² Nor does he omit to observe that the Master, after rising from the dead, reminded the Apostles that His Resurrection had been predicted by the prophets of the Old Testament.⁵³

St. John reports four apparitions of the risen Saviour: the first to Mary Magdalen on the morning of the Resurrection,⁵⁴ the second to the Apostles (with the exception of Thomas) on the evening of the same day,⁵⁵ the third to all the Apostles eight days later,⁵⁶ and the fourth to seven disciples on the shore of Lake Tiberias.⁵⁷

b) *The Testimony of the Witnesses Concerning the Resurrection.*—The essential features of all the reports on the Resurrection are two, namely, (a) that the grave in which the body of

⁵¹ John XX, 8, 28.

⁵² John XX, 25-27.

⁵³ John XX, 9.

⁵⁴ John XX, 11-18.

⁵⁵ John XX, 19-23.

⁵⁶ John XX, 24-29.

⁵⁷ John XXI, 1 sqq.; cfr. Belser, *op. cit.*, pp. 577 sq.

Jesus had been laid was found empty and (β) that the risen Lord appeared to a number of persons. The Resurrection itself, that is, the re-animation of the corpse and the Master's coming forth from the tomb, was observed by none of the witnesses. However, this fact does not justify doubts in the reality of the Resurrection. If it can be shown with certainty that Christ was no longer in the tomb on the third day after His death, and that He was seen alive elsewhere, no further evidence is required to prove that His soul was reunited with His body and He was risen from the dead. Now the two facts mentioned, namely, the empty grave and the apparitions of the risen Christ, beginning on the third day after His burial, can be demonstrated as historically certain.

a) *The Empty Grave*.—All four Evangelists⁵⁸ report that on the morning of the third day after the death of Christ, His grave, which had been fastened by a huge stone,⁵⁹ officially sealed and watched by a company of Roman soldiers,⁶⁰ was found to be empty. Even the enemies of Jesus were compelled to acknowledge

⁵⁸ Matth. XXVIII, 5 sq.; Mark XVI, 6; Luke XXIV, 3, 6; John XX, 6 sq., 12 sqq.

⁵⁹ Matth. XXVII, 60.

⁶⁰ Matth. XXVII, 62 sqq.

this fact after they had been informed of it by the guards, who, terrified by a sudden earthquake and a miraculous apparition, had hurried back to the city.⁶¹ The measures they adopted clearly reflect the desperate situation in which they found themselves. St. Matthew describes the incident as follows: "Some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And they being assembled together with the ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you, his disciples came by night, and stole him away when we were asleep. And if the governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him and secure you. So they taking the money, did as they were taught: and this word was spread abroad among the Jews, even unto this day."⁶²

β) *The Apparitions of the Risen Lord.*—All in all we know of twelve apparitions of Christ

⁶¹ Matth. XXVIII, 2-4, 11.

⁶² Matth. XXVIII, 11-15: "*Ecce quidam de custodibus venerunt in civitatem et annuntiaverunt principibus sacerdotum omnia, quae facta fuerant. Et congregati cum senioribus, consilio accepto, pecuniam copiosam dederunt militibus dicentes: dicite, quia discipuli eius nocte venerunt et furati sunt eum nobis dormientibus. Et si hoc auditum fuerit a praeside, nos suadebimus ei et securos vos faciemus. Et illi accepta pecunia, fecerunt, sicut erant edocti. Et divulgatum est verbum istud apud Iudaeos usque in hodiernum diem.*"

after His Resurrection. The place where He appeared is not always mentioned, and consequently the chronological sequence of the apparitions cannot be established with absolute certainty. Christ appeared:

(1) to Mary Magdalen on the morning of the Resurrection; ⁶³

(2) to the pious women going to the tomb at about the same time; ⁶⁴

(3) to St. Peter somewhat later on the same day; ⁶⁵

(4) to the two disciples who went to Emmaus towards evening of the same day; ⁶⁶

(5) to the Apostles, with the exception of St. Thomas, on the evening of the day of the Resurrection; ⁶⁷

(6) to all the Apostles, including St. Thomas, eight days later; ⁶⁸

(7) to the Apostles on a mountain in Galilee; ⁶⁹

(8) to seven disciples on Lake Tiberias; ⁷⁰

⁶³ Mark XVI, 9; John XX, 14-17.

⁶⁴ Matth. XXVIII, 9 sq.

⁶⁵ Luke XXIV, 34; 1 Cor. XV, 5.

⁶⁶ Luke XXIV, 13 sqq.; Mark XVI, 12 sq.

⁶⁷ Luke XXIV, 36 sqq.; John XX, 19 sqq.; 1 Cor. XV, 5.

⁶⁸ John XX, 24 sqq.; 1 Cor. XV, 7.

⁶⁹ Matth. XXVIII, 16 sqq.; Mark XVI, 14 sqq.

⁷⁰ John XXI, 1 sqq.

(9) to five hundred brethren all at once; ⁷¹

(10) to the Apostle James; ⁷²

(11) to the Apostles in Jerusalem and at Bethania on the day of His Ascension; ⁷³ and

(12) to St. Paul before Damascus some time later. ⁷⁴

These apparitions vary greatly as to the accompanying circumstances of time, place, persons, and manner. Christ sometimes appeared in the open air, sometimes in a closed chamber; occasionally on the public road or on the sea shore; then again on the top of a mountain. He appeared at all hours of the day, in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. He appeared not to the one or other individual only, but to groups assembled together, on one occasion to five hundred disciples at once. He was seen not only by women, but also by men, and all recognized Him plainly, heard His voice, touched His body, and ate and conversed with Him. In a word, the risen Master did everything He could to remove doubt in the reality of the apparitions and the identity of His glorified body with the material body He had before the Resurrection.

⁷¹ 1 Cor. XV, 6.

⁷² 1 Cor. XV, 7.

⁷³ Luke XXIV, 50 sqq.; Acts I, 4 sqq.

⁷⁴ 1 Cor. XV, 8.

Therefore, St. Luke was fully justified in writing: "He showed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God." ⁷⁵

B. The Miraculous Character of the Resurrection

After what we have said about the divine origin of the miracles of Christ, it needs no further argument to prove that His Resurrection was a miracle in the strict sense of the term. For all the reasons which we have enumerated in favor of a supernatural, divine causality of the miracles of Christ, apply *a fortiori* to the Resurrection, which far transcends His other miracles in importance. All the miracles of Christ, and especially the raising of the dead to life, transcend the powers of nature and of man, but this is especially true of His Resurrection, for, in arising from the dead, He restored His own body to life. If there can be no question of demonic causation in the case of the other miracles, then surely not in that of the Resurrection, which more than any other miracle wrought by Jesus impresses the stamp of truth and divinity on

⁷⁵ Acts 1, 3: "*Praebuit seipsum vivum post passionem suam in multis argumentis, per dies quadraginta apparens eis et loquens de regno Dei.*"

His teaching. If all the extraordinary works of Christ were genuine miracles wrought by divine power, then assuredly the most remarkable of all, namely, the Resurrection, was also a true miracle.

C. Christ's Appeal to the Miraculous Character of His Resurrection

1. On two distinct occasions Christ expressly appealed to His Resurrection as a proof of His divine mission. The first time was when the Jews challenged His authority for casting the sellers out of the Temple.⁷⁶ The guardians of the Temple—for it is they who are undoubtedly meant here—knew very well that no statute or special permission of the Sanhedrin authorized Jesus to act as He did. Hence, only an express divine commission could justify His conduct. The thought that Jesus might be authorized by God to attend to the sanctification of the Temple easily suggested itself to the Jews in view of the opinion, widely current at the time, that the Messiah would reform the religious worship of Israel and restore it to its pristine purity,⁷⁷ and in view of the answer which John the Baptist

⁷⁶ John II, 14-22.

⁷⁷ Cfr. M. J. Lagrange, *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, pp. 200 sq.

had given to the Pharisees when they asked him whether he was the promised Messiah. "I baptize with water," he said; "but there hath stood [*i. e.*, risen] one in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me: the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose."⁷⁸ In view of these facts many no doubt suspected that Jesus was the promised Messiah and looked for a proof of His claim in the shape of a supernatural sign or miracle.⁷⁹ "The Jews therefore . . . said to him: What sign dost thou shew unto us, seeing thou dost these things?"⁸⁰ Jesus answered: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."⁸¹ The Jews understood Him to refer to the material structure of their house of worship and replied: "Six and forty years was this temple in building; and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"⁸² The Evangelist comments on the incident as follows: "But he spoke

⁷⁸ John I, 26 sq.: "*Ego baptizo in aqua: medius autem vestrum stetit, quem vos nescitis. Ipse est, qui post me venturus est, qui ante me factus est, cuius ego non sum dignus, ut solvam eius corrigiam calceamenti.*"

⁷⁹ Cfr. Matth. XII, 23; John VII, 31.

⁸⁰ John II, 18: "*Quod signum ostendis nobis, quia haec facis?*"

⁸¹ John II, 19: "*Solvite templum hoc et in tribus diebus excitabo illud.*"

⁸² John II, 20: "*Quadraginta et sex annis aedificatum est templum hoc, et tu in tribus diebus excitabis illud?*"

of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen again from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Christ had said.”⁸³ Although the figure of speech which Jesus employed was not unusual at that time,⁸⁴ it seems neither the Jews nor even all of the disciples understood the hidden meaning of His words. From the remark made by St. John, however, this much is certain, that Jesus referred to His Resurrection as a sure proof of His Messianic character and His divine commission.

The other occasion when Jesus appealed to His Resurrection is described by St. Matthew as follows: “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him saying: Master, we would see a sign from thee. Who answering said to them: An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale’s belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the

⁸³ John II, 21 sq.: “*Ille autem dicebat de templo corporis sui. Cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis, recordati sunt discipuli eius, quia hoc dicebat; et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni, quem dixit Iesus.*”

⁸⁴ Cfr. 1 Cor. III, 16 sq.; VI, 19; 2 Cor. VI, 16; V, 1 sq.

earth three days and three nights.”⁸⁵ The opposition emphasized in this passage between the conduct of Jonas and that of the Son of man makes it clear that Our Lord was speaking of His Resurrection. For a fuller understanding of the text we must take into consideration the circumstances under which Jesus spoke. A short while before He had healed a man possessed by the devil.⁸⁶ The multitude, according to the Evangelist, was amazed and asked: “Is not this the son of David?”⁸⁷ In other words, is not Jesus the promised Messias? The Pharisees denied the conclusion implied in this query and attributed His cures to Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.⁸⁸ Thereupon Jesus explained to them the unreasonableness of their suspicion and declared that He cast out devils by the Spirit of God.⁸⁹ The Pharisees were not satisfied with this declaration, but demanded another sign,⁹⁰—“a sign

⁸⁵ Matth. XII, 38-40: “*Tunc responderunt ei quidam de scribis et Phariseis dicentes: Magister, volumus a te signum videre. Qui respondens ait illis: generatio mala et adultera signum quaerit, et signum non dabitur ei nisi signum Ionae prophetae. Sicut enim fuit Ionas in ventre ceti tribus diebus et tribus noctibus, sic erit filius hominis in corde terrae tribus diebus et tribus noctibus.*”

⁸⁶ Matth. XII, 22.

⁸⁷ Matth. XII, 23.

⁸⁸ Matth. XII, 24.

⁸⁹ Matth. XII, 25-28.

⁹⁰ Matth. XII, 38.

from heaven," as St. Luke puts it.⁹¹ This new sign, it seems, they would have been willing to accept as a proof of His Messianic character and divine mission. But no sign from Heaven was vouchsafed them; instead, Christ referred them to His Resurrection, the most genuine and reliable of all supernatural signs.

2. Besides these express appeals of the Saviour to His Resurrection, the Gospels contain other, less clearly worded, but still recognizable, references to that extraordinary miracle. We mean the passages in which Jesus speaks of His voluntary death and predicts that He will return to life by His own power. Both, death and the new life, are based on positive divine decrees. Thus He says on one occasion, according to St. John: "Therefore doth the Father love me: because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me: but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father."⁹² If we add to this the consideration that Jesus

⁹¹ Luke XI, 16.

⁹² John X, 17 sq.: "*Propterea me diligit Pater, quia ego pono animam meam, ut iterum sumam eam. Nemo tollit eam a me, sed ego pono eam a meipso, et potestatem habeo ponendi eam, et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi eam: hoc mandatum accepi a Patre meo.*"

was put to death because He had professed Himself to be the consubstantial Son of God,⁹³ we see that this reference to His taking up His life again after death is a clear appeal to the divine character of His Resurrection.

Let us now sum up the conclusions that flow from this argument. Three facts are certain: the historic reality of the Resurrection, its miraculous character, and Christ's appeal to this miracle as a proof of His divine mission. Hence there can be no doubt but that He was sent by God and that His teaching is divine. The Father Himself attested it by miraculously raising Him from the dead.

2. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AS A PROPHECY

Having discussed Christ's appeal to His Resurrection in proof of His divine mission and the historicity of the Resurrection in the previous section of this treatise, it remains for us to show that He predicted His Resurrection, and that the prophecy was of supernatural origin and was fulfilled to the letter.

⁹³ Matth. XXVI, 63 sqq.

A. The Historic Reality of the Prophecy of the Resurrection

1. Jesus clearly foretold that He would arise from the grave on the third day after His death.

Aside from the two texts already quoted,⁹⁴ there are others in which Jesus clearly foretold His Resurrection. On various occasions He predicted the Resurrection, either with or without the qualification that it was to take place "on the third day."

The *fact* of the Resurrection He mentions on two separate and distinct occasions. The first was immediately after His Transfiguration on the Mountain, when He charged His Apostles: "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead."⁹⁵ The second occasion was on the way to Mount Olivet, shortly before the beginning of the Passion, when He said to His Apostles: "All you shall be scandalized in me this night. . . . But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Matth. XII, 38 sqq.; John II, 14 sqq.

⁹⁵ Matth. XVII, 9: "*Praecipit eis Iesus dicens: nemini dixeritis visionem, donec filius hominis a mortuis resurgat.*" (Cfr. Mark IX, 8.)

⁹⁶ Matth. XXVI, 31 sq.: "*Dicit illis Iesus: omnes vos scandalum patiemini in me, in ista nocte. . . . Postquam autem resurrexero, praecedam vos in Galilaeam.*" (Cfr. Mark XIV, 27 sq.)

The *time* of the Resurrection is foretold in the passage in which He mentions the circumstances attending that miracle: "From that time Jesus began to shew to his disciples, that he must . . . be put to death, and the third day rise again." ⁹⁷

His enemies were aware of this prophecy, as can be seen from the arguments which they employed to persuade Pilate to guard the tomb. "And the next day the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away. . . ." ⁹⁸

2. Christ's *prophecy* that He would rise again on the third day after His death was fulfilled. The historicity of the Resurrection having been demonstrated above, it only remains to show that

⁹⁷ Matth. XVI, 21: "*Exinde coepit Iesus ostendere discipulis suis, quia oporteret eum . . . occidi et tertia die (τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ) resurgere.* Cfr. Matth. XVII, 22; XX, 19; Mark VIII, 31 ("*post tres dies resurgere*"); IX, 30; X, 34 (the Greek has μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας in all three of these texts); Luke IX, 22; XVIII, 33.

⁹⁸ Matth. XXVII, 62 sqq.: "*Convenerunt principes sacerdotum et Pharisei ad Pilatum dicentes: domine, recordati sumus, quia seductor ille dixit adhuc vivens; post tres dies resurgam. lube ergo custodiri sepulcrum usque in diem tertium, ne forte. . . .*"

the prediction came true also with regard to the detail of time. Jesus usually employs the phrase "on the third day" when He speaks of His Resurrection. (Cfr. the above-quoted passages from St. Matthew and St. Luke.) The expression "after three days," which is found in parallel passages of St. Mark, is identical in meaning, as may be seen from Matth. XXVII, 63. For St. Matthew, who, aside from XII, 40 and the present text, always employs the phrase "on the third day," here ascribes the words "after three days" to the enemies of Jesus, but at the same time records their petition that the tomb be guarded only "till the third day."

The case is similar with the phrase "three days and three nights" in Matth. XII, 40. Jewish usage, as recorded in the Old Testament, shows that this expression need not necessarily mean a period of seventy-two hours, but may signify simply three days with the intervening nights, in the sense that the first and last days were not full days, but simply parts of a day. Thus, the Book of Tobias relates that Sara "went into an upper chamber of her house: and for three days and three nights did neither eat nor drink," but fasted and prayed.⁹⁹ Esther enjoined Mordochai and his friends: "Neither eat

⁹⁹ Tob. III, 10.

nor drink for three days and three nights: and I with my handmaids will fast in like manner, and then I will go in to the king.”¹ But from the further course of the narrative it is apparent that she went in to the king already “on the third day.”² The New Testament writers assumed their readers to be familiar with this mode of speech, and hence St. Matthew did not hesitate to use the phrases “on the third day,” “after three days,” and “after three days and nights” synonymously.³ With due regard to this usage, the fulfilment of Christ’s prophecy can easily be demonstrated. Since His body was buried on Friday afternoon, before the beginning of the Sabbath, it rested in the grave a part of Friday, the whole of Saturday, and a part of the following Sunday, and so it is literally true that He arose “on the third day.”

Nor does it make any difference whether the

¹ Esther IV, 16: “*Non comedatis et non bibatis tribus diebus et tribus noctibus et ego cum ancillis meis similiter ieiunabo, et tunc ingrediar ad regem.*”

² Esther V, 1.

³ Cfr. on this point F. Zorell, S.J., *Novi Testamenti Lexicon Graecum*, s. v., *vûξ*; P. Iovino, S.J., *Disquisitio Critico-Biblica de Tempore Sepulturae Christi*, Woodstock, Md. Cfr. also the Roman mode of reckoning. The Romans counted both extremes (*terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem*) in defining the interval from one point to another. We have modern survivals in the terms “tertian” and “quartan ague” (cfr. any large dictionary). French *huit jours* for a week; *quinze jours*, for a fortnight, etc.

Jewish day began in the evening or at twelve o'clock at night. In the former case Christ spent a small portion of Friday, the whole of Saturday, and about one-half of Sunday in the grave. In the latter case His body lay in the tomb a somewhat larger portion of Friday, all day Saturday, and a somewhat smaller portion of Sunday.

*B. The Supernatural Character of the
Prophecy of the Resurrection*

As the Resurrection of Christ cannot be explained either by the known powers of nature, or by the machination of evil spirits, and as it depended entirely on the free will of God, there can be but one explanation for Christ's prescience and clear prediction of the event, and that is that he knew of it through supernatural, divine revelation. This explanation is not contradicted by the circumstance that Christ repeatedly cites the Old Testament prophets as foretelling His Resurrection. For in the writings of the Old Testament,⁴ the Resurrection of the Messiah is not so clearly and definitely foretold as in the prophecies of Christ Himself. Above all the determination of the time ("on the third day") is missing. Therefore, Christ's

⁴ Cfr. Ps. XV, 10 (Act. II, 31; XIII, 35).

prediction of His Resurrection was a genuine prophecy, and His appeal to the same must be regarded as a divine confirmation of His mission.

3. FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST BY PURELY NATURAL MEANS

As we have already indicated, the enemies of Christianity in the course of centuries have ex-cogitated three separate and distinct theories to account for the Resurrection, namely: (1) that Christ did not rise from the dead at all, but that His disciples perpetrated a fraud upon the public; (2) that His death was not real, but only apparent; and (3) that the risen Saviour was not a reality, but a subjective vision of His adherents. A critical examination of these theories, which were devised for the purpose of eliminating every vestige of the supernatural from the Gospel report of the Resurrection, will show their hollowness and thus indirectly confirm the conclusion reached above.

A. The Hypothesis of Fraud

The germ of this theory is contained in the story told by the bribed watchmen that the disciples came by night and stole the body of Jesus.

It was developed by Reimarus in his treatises "On the History of the Resurrection" and "Of the Purpose of Christ and His Disciples," first published by G. E. Lessing as "Fragments of an Unknown Writer," in 1778.⁵ Reimarus asserts that Jesus shared the view of His contemporaries that the Messiah would establish a political kingdom, and, when everything was ready, triumphantly enter Jerusalem. The Jews acclaimed Him as their Messiah and King; but the plot was frustrated by the watchful Pharisees. Jesus was arrested, tried, condemned to death, and executed. He died uttering the deeply significant words: "My God, my God, why hast thou abandoned me?" His death annihilated with one fell stroke all the hopes and dreams of His disciples, who had followed Him in the expectation of being appointed to high offices in the new kingdom. In mortal dread of the Jews, they hid in Jerusalem until they saw that no one was persecuting them, and then decided behind closed doors not to return to their respective professions, but to continue their career as heralds of the new faith, because it promised them a good livelihood and wide-spread fame. In pursuance of this aim they stole the body of Jesus, hid it,

⁵ Cfr. *supra*, pp. 279 sq.; A. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, Tübingen, 1921, pp. 15 sqq.

and feigned surprise when the grave was found empty. At first they said nothing in public, but after fifty days, when they felt sure that the corpse could not be identified, even if it were found, they openly proclaimed that Christ had risen from the dead.

This hypothesis is untenable for the following reasons:

1. The different historical accounts of the Resurrection do not intimate in the least that the disciples practiced any such deception.

2. It was psychologically impossible for the disciples to steal the body of Jesus. For, as their flight at the capture of their Master and the denial of Peter show, they were entirely too timid for such a bold stroke, and, on the other hand, there was no possible advantage they could expect from its successful perpetration, but rather they had to fear the same fate as their Master, namely persecution, imprisonment, and death if the fraud was discovered.

3. It was physically impossible for the disciples to steal the body. The tomb was guarded, and if they had attempted to obtain possession of the corpse by fraud or stratagem, it would have been impossible to hide the effort. The authorities would surely have started an investigation, and those who asserted that Christ had risen

from the dead would have been arrested and haled before the Sanhedrin. Nothing of the kind is reported in the New Testament. The Acts of the Apostles inform us that the Jewish authorities were displeased by the reports of the Resurrection and that they arrested Peter and John ⁶ and "charged them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus;" ⁷ but there is no intimation that they denied the report that Christ had risen from the dead or instituted an inquiry concerning its correctness.

B. The Theory that Christ was not Really Dead

This theory, which was modified in several respects by Hase, Schleiermacher, and Gfrörer, found its most elaborate presentation in a Life of Christ written by the Rationalist Dr. Paulus in 1828.⁸ It may be briefly sketched as follows: Christ's death on the cross was very gradual, resulting as it did from a process of progressive torpor which finally caused *rigor mortis*. This is the slowest of all known deaths. The Gospels represent Jesus as dying rather suddenly, but the loud cry which He uttered before He bowed

⁶ Acts IV, 1 sqq.

⁷ Acts IV, 18.

⁸ *Das Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristentums*, 2 vols., Heidelberg, 1828.

His head indicates that He fell into a coma, which ordinarily lasts until decomposition of the body sets in. While He was in this condition, several circumstances conspired to revive Him. The skin-wound in His side served to relieve the excessive blood pressure upon the heart. The coolness of the tomb, which was not closed airtight, and the invigorating odor of the spices, favored a revival. The storm and the earthquake restored Him to consciousness, and, besides, caused the stone to roll away from the entrance of the tomb. Jesus arose, laid aside the linen cloths in which His body had been wrapped, donned a gardener's suit, and left the tomb. This explains why Mary Magdalen at first mistook Him for the gardener. To show that this interpretation is not impossible, the advocates of the theory point to the fact that of three crucified men whom Josephus asked Titus to turn over to him at Tekoa, one was kept alive.⁹

Nevertheless, this theory is utterly untenable, as may be seen from the subjoined reflections:

1. Jesus was undoubtedly dead, for the reasons we have enumerated above.

2. The ardent enthusiasm which took the place of sadness and discouragement in the minds of

⁹ Cfr. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, pp. 54 sq.

His disciples, is inexplicable on any other hypothesis than that He had really and truly risen from the dead.¹⁰ Strauss felt this keenly when he wrote: "A man who had crept out of the grave, who crawled around feebly, who needed medical help, bandages, strengthening food and rest, and who finally succumbed to suffering, could not possibly have created the impression of one who had conquered death and was Lord of life, —which impression inspired the later career of the disciples; such a revival could only have weakened the impression He had made upon them in life and death, but it could not possibly have converted their sadness into enthusiasm or raised their devotion to the pitch of adoration."¹¹

C. The Vision Hypothesis

While the two theories just described, especially the former, appeal to but few critics at the present time, the vision hypothesis still has many adherents. In substance it is almost as old as Christianity itself. Celsus, an eclectic philosopher who flourished in the second century and whose teaching is known to us almost exclusively

¹⁰ 1 Cor. XV, 14.

¹¹ *Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet*, Leipsic, 1864, p. 298.

through Origen's famous treatise *Contra Celsum*,¹² says: "Who saw it? A half-frantic woman [γυνή πάροιστρος; the *femme hallucinée* of Renan] practiced in such jugglery, who was either deceived by her diseased and morbid mind and mistook a phantom for a reality, as many have done; or else (which seems to me more probable) was herself the author of this deception in order to astonish others or delude them into the same lie."¹³

The modern defenders of the theory hold that Christ did not rise from the dead at all, but His disciples merely saw a vision of their glorified Lord, which some critics believe to have been objective, whereas others regard it as purely subjective. The representatives of the former school (Keim, A. Schweitzer, Lotze) assume that the vision corresponded to an objective reality which God produced in the minds of the disciples, while others (Strauss, Renan,

¹² Cfr. Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology*, pp. 147 sqq.; W. Turner in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, pp. 490-492.

¹³ Quoted by Origen, *Contra Celsum*, II, 55 (Migne, *P.G.*, XI, 884 sq.) Cfr. F. Hettinger, *Revealed Religion* (tr. by H. S. Bowden), 2nd ed., London, 1905, p. 147. Origen is so careful to cite the very words of his opponent that it is possible to reconstruct the text of the latter's Ἀληθὴς Λόγος from the former's treatise Κατὰ Κέλσου, a task which was accomplished by Lachmann in 1836 and more successfully by Keim (*Celsus' Wahres Wort*, Zurich, 1873). Cfr. Turner, *l. c.*

Holtzmann, Meyer, Pfeleiderer, Harnack) regard the vision as a figment of the imagination. Steude briefly explains the fundamental postulates of this theory as follows: "The apparitions which the disciples saw after the death of Christ, and which led them to believe in His Resurrection, were hallucinations or pure illusions, with no external, real object, but were regarded and proclaimed by the disciples as the product of direct observation. In their low state of culture and with their characteristically Jewish narrow-mindedness, they were unable to perceive the illusory character of this vision, regarded what they saw as real and, in the light of the ideas they entertained of the time and people, were forced to conclude that Jesus had been raised up from the grave."¹⁴

This hypothesis rests upon two suppositions, namely, the extreme nervousness of the disciples and the vision of St. Paul at Damascus. Some of the disciples, like Mary of Magdala,¹⁵ were naturally disposed to hallucinations, while the

¹⁴ E. G. Steude, *die Auferstehung Jesu Christi*, Gütersloh, 1893, pp. 35 sq.

¹⁵ Renan says of her (*La Vie de Jésus*, Paris, 1863, ch. 26, towards the end): "*La forte imagination de Marie de Magdala joua dans cette circonstance un rôle capital. Pouvoir divin de l'amour! moments sacrés, où la passion d'une hallucinée donne au monde un Dieu resuscité!*"

others were readily led to "see things" by the terrible events of the Passion, which had stirred their souls to their inmost depths. Thus, it required but a slight occasion to bring before their minds, seemingly real, the figure of the Master, whose image was so deeply engraven in their memories. St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians,¹⁶ puts the apparitions of Christ to His disciples on a level with the vision he himself had been vouchsafed at Damascus. As the latter was purely subjective, a visionary experience of a man disposed to hallucinations,¹⁷ who suffered from recurrent attacks of epilepsy,¹⁸ and whose soul was profoundly agitated at the time, the visions of the disciples, too, must be regarded as purely subjective phenomena.

Against these assertions we contend that the vision hypothesis in both its forms is absolutely untenable.

1. It is untenable in its *objective form* because if the apparitions of Christ were visions produced by God in a supernatural way, they would necessarily have led to the belief that Christ had really and truly risen from the dead,—when as a matter of fact He did not. God, therefore,

¹⁶ 1 Cor. XV, 1 sqq.

¹⁷ 2 Cor. XII, 1 sqq.

¹⁸ 2 Cor. XII, 7.

by His supernatural intervention, would have become the direct author of an error which, according to St. Paul,¹⁹ would have destroyed Christianity in its very foundations. Such conduct would be incompatible with God's infinite veracity, and, therefore, we must reject a theory which, aside from having no objective support in the Gospels, entails such ludicrous consequences.

2. The theory that the apparitions of Christ after the Resurrection were *purely subjective* visions is equally untenable because it has no foundation either in the psychology of the disciples or in the vision of St. Paul at Damascus.

a) It has *no foundation in the psychology of the disciples* for the following reasons:

a) Visions and hallucinations, originating as they do in the soul, usually accommodate themselves to the views, opinions, and moods of the visionary. But this rule does not apply to the alleged visions of the disciples. The vision hypothesis cannot appeal to the popular beliefs of the Jewish people, which the disciples on the whole shared. For the Jews knew of but one resurrection, namely, the general resurrection of all flesh that was to take place at the Last Judg-

¹⁹ 1 Cor. XV, 14.

ment.²⁰ Before that judgment no man could arise from the dead.²¹ The popular beliefs of the Jews, therefore, could not have caused the disciples to expect their Master to come forth from the grave within so short a time after His death.

As regards the disciples' own views and beliefs, it seems that, at a later period, many of them did hold that Jesus would soon return to judgment.²² But in holding this belief they presupposed the Resurrection as a fact lying far back in the past. At the period with which we are now concerned there is not only no indication in the sources that the disciples expected the Resurrection of Christ, but the Gospels clearly attest the contrary, namely, that the idea of the Resurrection was something entirely new and unheard-of in the minds of the disciples,—so much so that it took some time before they were able fully to realize and accept it as a fact. Mary Magdalen, who, without reason, is described by the defenders of the vision hypothesis as strongly disposed to hallucinations, has no suspicion of the Resurrection even after she has seen the empty grave, but naïvely says to Peter and the

²⁰ Cfr. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. II, 4th ed., pp. 438-444.

²¹ Cfr. John XI, 24.

²² Cfr. I Pet. IV, 7; I Thess. IV, 15.

other disciples: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him."²³ And shortly afterwards she asks the risen Lord Himself, whom she mistakes for the gardener: "Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."²⁴ The Apostles reject the reports of the women that Christ was risen as "idle tales"²⁵ and refuse to take them seriously. The two disciples on the way to Emmaus did not believe the story until Christ personally convinced them of its truth.²⁶ When, upon their return to Jerusalem, they related what they had heard and seen, the Apostles in their turn were sceptical,²⁷ and when, soon after, Jesus Himself appeared to them in the room in which they were assembled, they thought they were seeing a ghost.²⁸ Not until the Lord shows them His hands and feet, not until He eats with them and allows them to touch His body, do they believe that He is really and truly risen from the dead.²⁹ The most sceptical was Thomas, who

²³ John XX, 2.

²⁴ John XX, 15.

²⁵ *Δῆρος*; Luke XXIV, 11.

²⁶ Luke XXIV, 22 sq., 31 sqq.

²⁷ Mark XVI, 13.

²⁸ Luke XXIV, 36 sq.

²⁹ Luke XXIV, 36 sqq.

refused to believe in the Resurrection except on condition that he be permitted to put his finger into the place of the nails and his hand into Christ's open side.³⁰ Some of the other disciples still doubted the reality of the Resurrection when Jesus appeared to them on a mountain in Galilee.³¹

In view of their state of mind it is impossible to suppose that the disciples were inclined to regard subjective visions of the risen Lord as objective apparitions. The simple truth is that they accepted the fact of the Resurrection as real, not because they had expected it and wished for it so long and ardently that they finally imagined it to be true, but because the objective evidence of its actuality—the empty grave and the repeated apparitions of the Master—was so

³⁰ John XX, 25.

³¹ Matth. XXVIII, 16 sq. The original refusal of the disciples to believe in the Resurrection of Christ cannot be used as an argument against His prophecy predicting that event. For St. Luke (XVIII, 34; cfr. Mark IX, 31) expressly remarks: "*Et ipsi nihil horum intellexerunt et erat verbum istud absconditum ab eis et non intelligebant, quae dicebantur.*" The disciples understood the literal sense of Our Lord's words, but were unable to harmonize it with their idea of the Messiah, whom they visioned as a great monarch, who would restore the political power of Israel (cfr. Acts I, 6). The concept of a suffering Messiah was as absolutely foreign to them as it was to all their contemporaries. (Cfr. Lagrange, *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, pp. 236 sqq.)

strong that all reasonable doubt simply had to vanish.

β) "Visions," says Dr. Gutberlet, "in the case of a large multitude, do not usually cease all at once, unless they have been induced by some bodily or psychic change or climatic influence, with the disparition of which the visions come to an end. Now the visions of the disciples begin definitely on the third day after the death of Christ and cease suddenly with His Ascension. It is simply ridiculous to assume that those same influences began and ceased to operate at exactly the same time in the case of all the disciples,—in other words, that an abnormal state of nervous excitement should last just as long in the case of many men of different character, produce exactly the same visions, and stop at precisely the same moment. What sort of climatic influence could have made the disciples see visions when none of the other inhabitants of Jerusalem saw them, is difficult to understand." ³²

γ) The vision hypothesis, moreover, is utterly inadequate to explain the "empty grave." Meyer's assertion: "No investigation of the grave took place; the empty grave was never

³² C. Gutberlet, *Lehrbuch der Apologetik*, Vol. II, 4th ed., Münster i. W., 1922, pp. 324 sq.

seen by any of the disciples of Jesus, male or female,"³³ openly contradicts the Gospel account. Nor do the documents afford any basis for the further assertion of the same writer that "the existing belief that He would arise from the dead, the joyful conviction: 'Jesus lives, we have seen Him,' was not a result of the empty grave, but contrariwise produced belief in that phenomenon in the minds of the disciples."³⁴ That there was no such pre-existing belief in the Resurrection, at least in the sense of the vision hypothesis, is shown by the arguments given under α and β .

b) Nor does the vision hypothesis find any support in *St. Paul's experience before the gates of Damascus*. The champions of this theory regard the vision of St. Paul as a purely subjective phenomenon, and since he places the apparitions reported by the disciples on a level with his own vision,³⁵ they argue that all apparitions of the risen Lord must be treated as purely subjective phenomena.

Since the visionary character of St. Paul's experience cannot be demonstrated with certainty, an attempt has been made to prove it by an

³³ A. Meyer, *Die Auferstehung Christi*, Tübingen, 1905, p. 213.

³⁴ Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

³⁵ 1 Cor. XV, 5 sqq.

analysis of the Apostle's state of mind. Saul, it is said, had become acquainted with the teaching of Christ through the apologetic discourse of St. Stephen and through contact with the Christians whom he was persecuting. He saw that their teaching was opposed to the Mosaic law, but he also knew that the Christians tried to justify themselves by pointing to the Resurrection of Christ. The possibility of the Resurrection he could not doubt. Its reality was brought home to him by the contention of the Christians that Christ had been put to death innocently and by the courage with which they professed their faith. Thus, not once, but frequently, the question must have arisen in his mind, whether Christ was not, after all, the promised Messiah and whether it was not a crime to persecute His followers. His soul was harassed by doubts, which grew from day to day. It was in this state of mind that Saul set out for Damascus. On the way he could quietly reason out the problem with himself, and gave much thought to his hostile attitude towards the Christian religion. Before Damascus the struggle within his soul and his nervous excitement reach their climax. Paul falls into a sort of trance. He sees the glorified Christ and becomes convinced that

He had really and truly risen from the dead, as the Christians asserted.³⁶

a) This interpretation, however, cannot be reconciled with the detailed description given of the vision of the Apostle in the Acts. The story, as told there by St. Luke, does not at all create the impression that the vision was purely subjective; on the contrary, the circumstances positively exclude this interpretation. Saul's companions saw the light and heard the voice that spoke to him, but he himself was struck with blindness. These facts are incompatible with a purely subjective vision. That the men who were with him "heard indeed a voice, but saw no man,"³⁷ was probably owing to the light from heaven, which momentarily blinded not only him, but them as well. This interpretation of the incident is confirmed and partly strengthened by the two other accounts in the Acts,³⁸ which were no doubt inspired by the Apostle himself.³⁹ The minor variations found in the

³⁶ Cfr. E. Moske, *Die Bekehrung des hl. Paulus*, Münster, 1907, pp. 52 sqq.

³⁷ Acts IX, 7.

³⁸ Acts XXII, 6 sqq.; XXVI, 12 sqq.

³⁹ Cfr. F. Tillmann, "*Einige Bemerkungen zur Kritik der Osterbotschaft und der Auferstehungsberichte*," in *Theologie und Glaube*, 1910, pp. 546 sq.

different accounts must be attributed to their incompleteness.⁴⁰

β) St. Paul's own account of his conversion and of the incident before Damascus confirms our interpretation. Nowhere in his Epistles does he intimate that his conversion was preceded by doubts in the validity of the Mosaic law or that he was not in good faith when he persecuted the Christians. On the contrary, his own words in the Epistle to the Galatians⁴¹ show that "before his conversion his position among the Jews was in no wise shaken, and he considered it his duty to champion the law with all the force of his personality."⁴² A remark in his first letter to Timothy⁴³ indicates that he had persecuted the Christians "ignorantly in unbelief." Therefore "he feels himself free from guilt; he believes that he acted according to his best knowledge and regards the sincerity of his conduct as the very reason why God had mercy on him and conducted him into the Christian pale."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Moske, *Die Bekehrung des hl. Paulus*, pp. 8 sqq.

⁴¹ Gal. I, 13 sqq.

⁴² Moske, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁴³ 1 Tim. I, 13.

⁴⁴ Moske, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

γ) St. Paul himself draws a clear-cut distinction between his experience before Damascus and his visions. The Damascus incident he describes as an external objective event, several features of which had been observed by his companions. In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, on the other hand, he tells of visions which represent a purely internal experience.⁴⁵ In view of the distinction which he himself draws it is not permissible to conclude that his vision at Damascus was purely subjective. True, he puts it on a level with the apparitions of the risen Lord vouchsafed to the disciples; but we cannot admit the validity of the conclusion which our opponents draw from this parallel, namely, that the latter apparitions, like the former, were purely subjective experiences. For the Damascus apparition, as we have seen, was an objective occurrence, and consequently the visions vouchsafed to the disciples must also have been real, objective appearances of the risen Christ.

In 1 Cor. St. Paul states, "Christ died and was buried and rose on the third day." He employs the same subject throughout. Christ died in the flesh, was buried according to the flesh, and rose in the flesh.

⁴⁵ 2 Cor. XII, 2 sqq.

Was Christ a Spiritistic Medium?

For the sake of completeness we will notice the theory broached by R. A. Hoffmann,⁴⁶ that the apparitions of Christ after His Resurrection were Spiritistic materializations and that He and some of His disciples were endowed with mediumistic powers.

The true efficient cause of all these apparitions, according to Dr. Hoffmann, was Christ Himself.⁴⁷ His astral or pneumatic body, which at death had become separated from the coarse material body, and the extremely subtle material element of which was strengthened and solidified by currents issuing from the bodies of His disciples, especially Peter, repeatedly made its appearance among the disciples. Through this pneumatic body, Jesus, who after His death belonged to a higher realm of spirits, communicated with His followers on earth, ate with them, and allowed them to touch Him with their hands.⁴⁸ "Behind the somewhat fantastic account of the Acts of the Apostles describing how, after His last conversation with the Twelve, the glorified Master was raised up and taken away by a

⁴⁶ *Das Geheimnis der Auferstehung Jesu*, Leipsic, 1921.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, pp. 162 sqq.

cloud,⁴⁹ may possibly lurk the true recollection of a gradual dissolution of His figure. . . . The cloud which Luke mentions would in that case have been, not a mere mass of condensed vapor floating in the sky, but a formless materialization in process of evanescing.”⁵⁰

Hoffmann was led to evolve this novel theory by the development of the phenomena of materialization, which in his opinion demanded such an explanation, and by the consideration that “the three hitherto known methods of explaining the apparitions of Christ after the Resurrection are decidedly unsatisfactory.”⁵¹

Critique of this Theory.—The theory explaining the apparitions of the risen Saviour as phenomena of materialization is untenable for a number of reasons. In the first place it cannot be squared with the historical fact that the grave was found empty. What became of Christ's earthly body if that which appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection was an astral or pneumatic body? The assertion that there was no reason why the disciples should have examined the tomb, the exact location of which was perhaps no longer ascertainable, and that the

⁴⁹ Acts I, 9.

⁵⁰ Hoffmann, *Das Geheimnis der Auferstehung Jesu*, p. 146.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

persuasion that the grave was empty was simply a result of their belief that the Master had risen from the dead,⁵² is incompatible with the very definite statements of the Evangelists concerning the condition of the grave on Easter morning. Hoffmann's hypothesis, secondly, has no support in the thoughts and actions of the disciples of Jesus. They refused to admit the actuality of the apparitions and made no preparations to induce such phenomena. It is arbitrary to assert that the materializations of the astral body of Jesus were strengthened by currents issuing from the bodies of His disciples. The argument that there are mediums who are not aware of their power and that there are "double-gangers" (doubles of living persons) and imaginary forms that appear without the aid of a medium is meaningless in this connection, because it is by no means proved that the apparitions of the risen Saviour were the result of mediumistic faculties in the disciples and of materializations of an astral body. Thirdly, it cannot be proved that, at the death of Jesus, His astral body separated itself from His earthly body and only the former, and not the Saviour Himself with His glorified earthly body, appeared to the disciples. Jesus had clearly and

⁵² *Op. cit.*, p. 150.

definitely predicted that He would arise from the dead. The fulfilment of this prophecy demanded the reanimation of His dead body, the empty grave, and His reappearance in a glorified material body, just as the Gospels report it. This conclusion cannot be shaken by Hoffmann's assertion: "And if some one should suggest that perhaps the earthly body was transformed into a heavenly body, we must say that this, too, is impossible, because in that case the same body would have had to be alternately an earthly and a heavenly body."⁵³ For the historical actuality of the apparitions of Jesus after the Resurrection is so firmly established that their possibility cannot reasonably be doubted. The question how the apparitions were effected does not concern us here. Perhaps the natural powers of His soul were able to give to the glorified body of Christ a palpable form, or perhaps they received supernatural aid for this purpose. In any case there was a cause adequate to produce the effect.

4. ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS IN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS OF THE RESURRECTION

The refutation of the Rationalist theories which have been devised to account for the Res-

⁵³ *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

urrection of Christ constitutes a negative confirmation of that fact. The same may be said of the solution of the alleged contradictions in the Biblical accounts of the Resurrection.

These contradictions, we are told, are of a twofold kind: some refer to the circumstances accompanying the Resurrection, while others appertain to essential features of the different accounts, *i. e.*, the apparitions of Jesus and the empty grave.

A. Alleged Contradictions in the Circumstances Attending the Resurrection

A. Meyer asserts: "Among all the circumstances which are said to have attended the Resurrection of Jesus, there is hardly one concerning which the accounts fully agree. Even if we limit ourselves to the descriptions given in the New Testament, we find so many contradictions that no consistent picture of the events can be drawn without all manner of desperate artifices." ⁵⁴ He then proceeds to enumerate all the alleged "contradictions" which have formed the stock-in-trade of infidel critics ever since Reimarus, with the addition of a few new ones, derived mainly from the apocryphal gospels.

⁵⁴ *Die Auferstehung Christi*, Tübingen, 1905, p. 85.

Some of the ten "contradictions" compiled by Reimarus are, as even Lessing had to admit in his "Duplik," based on a false interpretation of the text. The remainder may be traced to the incomplete character of the reports. We need not enter upon a refutation of these and similar "contradictions," since there is question only of differences in the narration of unimportant details, in regard to which actual contradictions, even if they could be shown to exist, would not impair the credibility of the sacred writers so far as the principal subject of their narrative, *i. e.*, the fact of the Resurrection, is concerned. It is not our aim in this treatise to demonstrate the complete inerrancy of the Biblical accounts of the Resurrection,—which inerrancy, according to Catholic belief, is a necessary result of the divine inspiration of the Gospels and Epistles. All we have to do is to defend the historical reliability of those accounts in so far as they concern the *fact of the Resurrection*. This reliability is not weakened by the circumstance that several independent writers disagree with one another on minor points, as long as they concur in essentials, as the sacred writers do in telling the story of the Resurrection. Minor discrepancies in regard to accompanying circumstances, therefore, would not permit us to con-

clude that the different narrators are unreliable also in regard to the essential features of the Resurrection, where they show complete agreement. In this respect Lessing was perfectly right when he wrote: "Who has ever permitted himself to employ the same process of reasoning in profane history? If Livy and Polybius and Dionysius and Tacitus narrate the same event, *e. g.*, a battle or a siege, each accompanying the main fact with many details bristling with contradictions, who for this reason has ever denied the event itself concerning which they agree? Have men refused credence to these writers until ways and means were found to confine those obstinate circumstances, like so many pugnacious goats, in a narrow stable, where they are compelled to stop fighting? . . . If Livy and Dionysius and Polybius and Tacitus are treated so frankly and nobly by us that we do not stretch them upon the rack for every divergent syllable, why do we treat Matthew and Mark and Luke and John differently?"⁵⁵ In leaving the complete harmonization of differences in non-essentials to the exegetes,⁵⁶ therefore, we proceed to the second group of alleged

⁵⁵ *Theologische Streitschriften: Eine Duplik*, 1778.

⁵⁶ Cfr. especially J. E. Belser, *History of the Passion*, pp. 579 sqq.

contradictions, which refer to the Resurrection itself.

*B. Alleged Contradictions in the Biblical
Accounts of the Empty Grave and the
Apparitions of the Risen Saviour*

It is these alleged contradictions above all others which A. Meyer has in mind when he says: "There is no agreement in the primitive Christian as well as in the Biblical accounts regarding most important details upon which the correct view of the events absolutely depends, and concerning which there would have to be clarity if the whole narrative were to be accepted as reliable."⁵⁷

According to the Rationalist Bible critics the belief in the risen Christ originated as follows: Soon after the death of their Master, as the apocryphal gospel of Peter testifies,⁵⁸ the disciples fled to Galilee. There Peter had the first apparition of Christ. St. Paul reports this fact in 1 Corinthians,⁵⁹ and the story is very plausible in

⁵⁷ *Die Auferstehung Christi*, p. 93.

⁵⁸ S. E. Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Tübingen and Leipsic, 1904, p. 32; M. Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, 1924, p. 94.

⁵⁹ 1 Cor. XV, 5.

view of the mental state in which the Apostles must have been at that time. "More than any of the others, Peter must have been in an almost intolerable frame of mind. He had promised the Master to be faithful to Him unto death and then betrayed Him in the presence of a servant maid, and the cock crowed. He could no longer afford to appear in public, but had to be ashamed of himself. Fallen from heaven and no longer safe anywhere on earth, physically exhausted, over-excited, unable to see a way out of his predicament, he was precisely in the kind of quandary in which ordinary mortals cease to think logically, and either despair or, like the Camisards, have visions."⁶⁰ The first apparition of the Master to Peter was purely internal and subjective; it was soon followed by others, and thus originated the belief in the Resurrection of Jesus, which was soon preached as an article of faith.

1. This theory, we are assured, agrees fully with the most ancient tradition, which knows only apparitions of Christ in Galilee, possibly followed at a later period by others in Jerusalem.⁶¹

⁶⁰ A. Meyer, *Die Auferstehung Christi*, p. 303. On the Calvinist sect of the Camisards and their "seers" and "prophets" see J. F. Sollier in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 218.

⁶¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 127 sqq.

2. This theory, we are further told, permits us to perceive that the story that Christ first appeared on the third day after His death, is unhistorical. 1 Cor. XV, 4 and Luke XXIV, 45 are invoked to prove that this statement was a deduction from certain prophetic passages in the Old Testament, supported by the utterances of Christ Himself, or based upon "ancient mythology and astronomy."⁶²

3. The empty grave is characterized as a later invention and as a result of the already widespread belief in the Resurrection. St. Paul, we are assured, knew nothing about it.⁶³

4. Finally, the critics quote ancient sources in proof of their contention that all the apparitions of the risen Saviour were nothing but interior and purely subjective visions, to be judged in the light of the experience which St. Paul had before Damascus.⁶⁴

If this interpretation were correct, the narratives of St. Matthew (except XXVIII, 9 sq.) and of St. Mark (without the conclusion XVI, 9-20) would directly contradict those of St. Luke and St. John (without ch. XXI), and all of these narratives in their present form would

⁶² *Op. cit.*, pp. 178 sqq.

⁶³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 120 sqq.

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 186 sqq.

contain *manifest untruths*. What are we to think of this? Let us briefly examine the single points in the light of the Gospels.

Ad. 1. St. Paul, whose account of the Resurrection⁶⁵ is regarded by modern critics as the most ancient of all, localizes none of the six apparitions which he mentions. Consequently, we must admit at least the possibility that some of them may have taken place in Judea. Moreover, it cannot be proved that it was his intention to enumerate all the apparitions of Christ of which he had knowledge. The purpose of his first letter to the Corinthians required him to make a selection and to omit the apparition of the risen Lord to the women of Judea. For this reason St. Paul cannot possibly be regarded as a witness to a tradition which was exclusively Galilean in its origin.

If we turn our attention to the Gospels, we find that St. Luke reports only those apparitions which took place in Jerusalem and its immediate neighborhood. The critics try to explain this by the assumption that this account is derived from a later tradition. We must not overlook the fact, however, that the sequence of the apparitions in the Lucan account shows a marked similarity

⁶⁵ 1 Cor. XV.

with that given by St. Paul,⁶⁶ that St. Luke was the companion of St. Paul, and composed his Gospel before he wrote the Acts. This combination of circumstances brings the Lucan account into direct proximity with the Pauline tradition, whence it may with certainty be concluded that St. Paul, too, was aware of the apparitions of the risen Master in Judea and that, consequently, there was a primitive tradition concerning these apparitions in Judea as well as in Galilee.

The critics appeal in favor of their theory to the older accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark, but disregard the fact that the Gospel of St. Matthew mentions one apparition of Christ in Judea, namely, that vouchsafed to the holy women.⁶⁷ That this passage of St. Matthew's Gospel is spurious we have no right to assume, since its textual history is unimpeachable.

As regards St. Mark, the critics call attention to the fact that up to XVI, 8 the second Gospel reports no apparition of the risen Saviour, but merely the command to the disciples to go to Galilee, where they would see the Master. The critics reject the present conclusion of St. Mark's Gospel as unauthentic and, in view of the command given to the disciples, assume that the

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Matth. XXVIII, 9 sq.

original text mentioned no other apparitions except those which occurred in Galilee. But even if—what has by no means been proved—the present conclusion of St. Mark's Gospel,⁶⁸ which is wanting in the most ancient Greek codices (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) and also in the Syriac version, would actually be unauthentic, the command given to the disciples would not suffice to justify the assertion that the original conclusion mentioned none but Galilean apparitions. Still less is it permissible to erect on such a slender foundation a theory which rejects as unhistorical all Evangelical reports that relate apparitions of Christ as happening in Judea during the first few days after the Resurrection.

The main support of the Galilean tradition is a fragment of the apocryphal Gospel of Peter, which mentions no apparition of the Saviour in Galilee, but in its final words ("I, Simon Peter, and Andrew, my brother, took our nets and went away to sea; and with us was Levi, the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord. . . ."),⁶⁹ justifies the conclusion that in the original version this passage was followed by an account of an apparition of the risen Lord on the shores of Lake Genesareth. But since this fragment of the Pe-

⁶⁸ Mark XVI, 9-20.

⁶⁹ Hennecke, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, p. 32.

trine Gospel, in the opinion of experts,⁷⁰ was not composed before the middle of the second century, and contains no authentic information not found in the four canonical Gospels, nothing would be gained for the case of our critics, even if their contention in regard to it were well founded.

The Gospel of St. John, like that of St. Luke, up to XX, 31 reports only apparitions of the Saviour in Judea, and the critics say that its final chapter, which is a later addition, attempts to harmonize the Judaic and Galilean traditions. Assuming this contention to be well-founded, we must insist that in that case the fourth Gospel, by adding the Galilean apparition to the previously reported apparitions of Christ in Judea, shows that its author regarded the Judean and not the Galilean tradition as the more ancient.

Consequently, the assertion that primitive tradition knows of no apparitions of the risen Lord in Judea is without foundation. The most ancient reports mention Galilean and Judean apparitions side by side.

Intimately connected with the assumption that the first apparitions of Christ occurred in Gali-

⁷⁰ Cfr. O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, Vol. I, 2nd ed., pp. 526 sq.; M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 90.

lee is another, namely, that the disciples fled to Galilee immediately or soon after the death of Jesus. Let us see whether our sources justify this assertion. We read in the Gospels that the disciples fled when Jesus was seized by His enemies, but nothing is said to indicate that they went at once to Galilee. In fact, the further course of the story makes this appear highly improbable. On the third day after the death of the Saviour the pious women are instructed by the angel to tell His disciples to betake themselves to Galilee, where they would see Him.⁷¹ Evidently the disciples were still in Jerusalem at that time. Yet all this is reported by St. Matthew and St. Mark, the very Evangelists who are alleged to locate all the apparitions of Jesus in Galilee. Hence the critics have no other choice than to impugn the authenticity of the respective texts.⁷² But they can adduce no valid reason for their rejection. Whoever examines the sources dispassionately, is forced to admit that the disciples were still in Jerusalem on the day of Our Lord's Resurrection, and there is no reason that forbids us to assume that His first apparitions took place in that city rather than in Galilee.

Ad 2. The critics assert that the third day

⁷¹ Matth. XXVIII, 7; Mark XVI, 7.

⁷² Thus A. Meyer, *Die Auferstehung Christi*, pp. 104 sq.

after the death of Christ cannot possibly have been the day of His first apparition, for the first apparitions took place in Galilee, and under the Mosaic law the disciples were not allowed to make a journey of any length on the Sabbath.⁷³ This argument has already been refuted above, where we showed that the disciples were still in Jerusalem on the "third day," and that the risen Saviour appeared to them there.

To show how the opinion originated that Christ arose on the first day of the week, the critics, who are otherwise averse to definite prophecies and their fulfilment, point to certain Old Testament predictions, which, they assert, contained the detail of the third day. Among other authorities they quote St. Paul, who says in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: "He rose again the third day, according to the scriptures."⁷⁴ However, from the words of the Apostle alone—and the same holds true of a similar passage in St. Luke's Gospel⁷⁵—it is impossible to make out whether the phrase "according to the scriptures" refers to the Resurrection itself or to the fact that it was to take place on the third day, or to both parts of the prophecy to-

⁷³ Cfr. Acts I, 12; Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. II, 2nd ed., p. 557.

⁷⁴ 1 Cor. XV, 4.

⁷⁵ Luke XXIV, 46.

gether. In order to ascertain the true meaning, therefore, it is necessary to consult primitive Christian tradition, which allows us to perceive clearly: (1) that the Jews generally believed that the Resurrection of Christ was predicted in the Old Testament, and (2) that no attempt was ever made to deduce the fact that He was to arise on the third day from any Old Testament prophecy. Of the only passage of the Old Testament which is mentioned in the New Testament ⁷⁶ in connection with the Resurrection of Christ on the third day, the critics themselves admit that it alone "cannot have been the reason why the death [*sic!* what is meant is the Resurrection] of Jesus was said to have occurred after three days, or even on the third day." ⁷⁷ In view of this fact the critics found themselves forced to seek other Old Testament texts from which the Resurrection on the third day might possibly have been deduced. One which they discovered is Osee VI, 3: "He will revive us after two days; on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Another is 4 Kings XX, 5, where Yahweh promises to heal King Ezechias: "I have heard

⁷⁶ Jonas II, 1; Matth. XII, 40.

⁷⁷ A. Meyer, *Die Auferstehung Christi*, p. 180.

thy prayer, and I have seen thy tears: and behold I have healed thee; on the third day thou shalt go up to the temple of the Lord." But the discoverers of these texts themselves complain that "all these texts combined [the famous one from Jonas and the two we have just quoted] are not quite sufficient to produce such a definite opinion."⁷⁸ In view of these facts it is hardly necessary for us to discuss the pagan mythological motives which are adduced by the critics in connection with an event to which they can have no possible application.

One thing is certain: our interpretation, according to which the "third day" expresses the historical date of the Resurrection, has nothing to fear from the critics, as the inanity of the reasons adduced for the contrary view clearly proves.

Ad 3. The report that the grave of Jesus was found empty is regarded by most Rationalist critics as a later addition to the Gospel text. But it can be shown with certainty that this passage formed part and parcel of the most ancient tradition, for which the critics find a secure basis in the writings of St. Paul,⁷⁹ who does not, it is true, expressly refer to the empty grave, but in

⁷⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

⁷⁹ Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

speaking of the Resurrection of Christ employs phrases and metaphors which would be unintelligible without the idea of the empty grave as a result of the Resurrection. The expressions ἐγέρχεται ⁸⁰ (literally, "he was awakened") and ἀνέστη ⁸¹ ("he rose again") denote a conception of death as a state resembling sleep. Hence when St. Paul says of the dead ⁸² and buried ⁸³ Christ that He was awakened, and that He rose again, he evidently has in mind the body in the grave, which, after being reanimated, abandoned its resting-place and left the tomb empty. The same thought underlies the Pauline simile comparing the body to a grain of wheat.⁸⁴ As the grain, when it becomes quickened, leaves the earth in which it has been buried, and is changed into a living plant, so it is with the bodies of the dead, among whom Christ is the first,⁸⁵ since He was the first to arise from the grave to new life.

In the mind of the Apostle, therefore, the Resurrection of Christ is inseparable from the

⁸⁰ I Cor. XV, 4.

⁸¹ I Thess. IV, 14.

⁸² I Cor. XV, 3.

⁸³ I Cor. XV, 4.

⁸⁴ I Cor. XV, 36 sqq.

⁸⁵ I Cor. XV, 22 sq.

idea of the empty grave, and consequently primitive Christian tradition was familiar with both.⁸⁶

The opinion mentioned under No. 4, that the primitive Christian tradition regarded the apparitions of the risen Saviour as purely subjective visions, has been sufficiently dealt with above, and can therefore be passed over here.

Surveying this whole section once more, we arrive at the conclusion that the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection of Christ cannot be shown to contain any contradictions endangering their credibility and there is not between the various writers that alleged lack of agreement "regarding highly important details, on which the correct view of the events . . . depends." This lack of agreement exists only in the imagination of the critics. A more accurate, comprehensive, and profound consideration of the various details of the story in its earlier as well as its later form enables us to combine them all easily and naturally into one consistent and harmonious whole. Thus, the attacks of infidels became a means of confirming the reliability of the Gospels.

⁸⁶ Cfr. F. Loofs, *Die Auferstehungsberichte und ihr Wert*, 3rd ed., Tübingen, 1908, p. 14.

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VI. RÔLE OF MIRACLES IN THE HISTORICAL
DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY

1. The miracles which concern us in this section of our treatise, *e. g.*, the rapid spread of Christianity, do not consist of sharply defined individual events, but of an aggregation of facts and occurrences coalescing, as it were, into one great, nay, extraordinary phenomenon,—extraordinary not in the sense that it *per se* completely transcends nature, as, for example, the Resurrection of Christ, but only in so far as, according to the usual order of things and in view of the customs and habits, the physical and moral weaknesses of men, the *ensemble* of these events cannot be explained without the positive supernatural concurrence of God. In order to explain this sort of phenomena, therefore, it is permitted to conclude, not with physical, but with true moral certainty, that they were caused by a supernatural intervention on the part of God. For this reason some writers speak of them as *miracles of the moral order*. In what manner the miraculous phenomenon as a whole is realized in detail, whether by external acts or internal divine illumination and strengthening, is a problem into which we need not enter here.

2. To this class of miracles belong above all three, which stand in a most intimate relation to the historical development of Christianity. We mean: (1) the rapid spread of the Christian religion; (2) the heroic fortitude of the martyrs, and (3) the regenerative effects of Christianity in the social, moral, and religious spheres. But these facts are important for our present purpose only in so far as they appertain to the first three centuries of the Christian era. For, after the persecutions had subsided under Constantine the Great, Christians were no longer put to death for their faith, and the interests of the Church were largely fostered by the State, so that many a phenomenon which had a clearly supernatural character before that time, could now be explained by natural causes.

3. That we speak of miracles in the development of the Christian religion, and not of the Church, is owing to the fact that we have not as yet demonstrated that Christ established a church. For the same reason we disregard in this connection the argument derived from the preservation of Christian doctrine and the indestructibility of the Church.

4. The Vatican Council emphasizes the value of these historical miracles when it says: "For to the Catholic Church alone belong all those

many and admirable tokens which have been divinely established for the evident credibility of the Christian faith. Nay, more, the Church itself, by reason of its marvelous extension, its eminent holiness, and its inexhaustible fruitfulness in every good thing, its Catholic unity and its invincible stability, is a great and perpetual motive of credibility, and an irrefutable witness of its own divine mission.”⁸⁷

I. The Rapid Spread of Christianity

In order that the extension of Christianity may be used as an argument for its divine origin, it is necessary to demonstrate, (1) that the Christian religion actually spread with extraordinary rapidity and (2) that this rapid spread must be attributed to a supernatural, divine influence. Once this point has been established, the divine origin of Christianity can no longer be denied. since it is impossible to assume that God would

⁸⁷ *Conc. Vatic.*, Sess. III, C. 3, *de Fide*: “*Ad solam enim catholicam Ecclesiam ea pertinent omnia, quae ad evidentem fidei christianae credibilitatem tam multa et tam mira divinitus sunt disposita. Quin etiam Ecclesia per se ipsa, ob suam nempe admirabilem propagationem, eximiam sanctitatem et inexhaustam in omnibus bonis foecunditatem, ob catholicam unitatem invictamque stabilitatem magnum quoddam et perpetuum est motivum credibilitatis et divinae suae legationis testimonium irrefragabile.*” (Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg, *Enchiridion*, n. 1794.)

lend His miraculous intervention to aid in the triumph of a false religion.

We maintain that the extraordinarily rapid spread of the Christian religion is a proof of its divine origin. This we prove as follows: A doctrine or religion which, after being put forward by its author as divinely revealed, spreads in an extraordinary and supernatural manner, must actually be divinely revealed. Now the religion established by Christ during the first three centuries of its existence spread in an extraordinary and supernatural manner. Therefore, the religion of Christ must be divinely revealed.

A. The Extraordinary Spread of the Christian Religion in the First Three Centuries

1. The Apostolic Age

The number of those who professed the Christian religion during the life-time of Jesus Christ was not large. In the "upper room" at Jerusalem after the Ascension were gathered only about one hundred and twenty persons to expect the descent of the Holy Ghost.⁸⁸ But the very first sermon of St. Peter resulted in many conversions. "There were added in that day about three thou-

⁸⁸ Acts I, 15.

sand souls.”⁸⁹ Not long after, we read, “many of them who had heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was made five thousand.”⁹⁰ And again: “The multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord, was more increased.”⁹¹ The persecution which broke out after the death of St. Stephen compelled many Christians to leave their homes. This again served to spread the Christian religion more widely, for “they that were dispersed went about preaching the word of God.”⁹² Thus the Christians of Jerusalem, when St. Paul about twenty-four years later (*ca.* 58) told them of his success among the pagans, could point with pride to the large number of Jews who had embraced the religion of Jesus Christ: “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews that have believed.”⁹³

Thus the Christian religion had spread far beyond the limits of Palestine already during the life-time of the Apostles. St. Peter addresses

⁸⁹ Acts II, 41: “*Et appositae sunt in die illa animae circiter tria millia.*”

⁹⁰ Acts IV, 4.

⁹¹ Acts V, 14: “*Magis autem augebatur credentium in Domino multitudo virorum ac mulierum.*”

⁹² Acts VIII, 4: “. . . qui dispersi erant, pertransibant, evangelizantes verbum Dei.”

⁹³ Acts XXI, 19 sq.: “*Vides, frater, quot millia (πόσαι μυριάδες) sunt in Iudaeis, qui crediderunt.*”

his first Epistle "To the strangers dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." St. Paul makes extensive missionary journeys, and St. John says: "What thou seest, write in a book, and send to the seven churches which are in Asia, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamus, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."⁹⁴ St. Paul repeatedly says in his Epistles that the Christian faith had spread far and wide. "For from you was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia, and in Achaia, but also in every place."⁹⁵ "Your faith is spoken of in the whole world."⁹⁶ "The gospel . . . is come unto you, as also it is in the whole world, and bringeth forth and groweth, even as it doth in you."⁹⁷ While the phrase "in the whole world" is not, of course, to be interpreted literally, it shows how widely Christianity had spread by the middle of the first century. That the number of its adherents was quite large, at

⁹⁴ Apoc. I, 11: "*Scribe in libro et mitte septem ecclesiis, quae sunt in Asia, Epheso et Symrnae et Pergamo et Thyatirae et Sardis et Philadelphiae et Laodiceae.*"

⁹⁵ 1 Thess. I, 8: "*In omni loco [non solum in Macedonia et in Achaia] fides vestra . . . profecta est.*"

⁹⁶ Rom. I, 8: "*Fides vestra annuntiatur in universo mundo.*"

⁹⁷ Col. I, 6: "*[Evangelium] quod pervenit ad vos sicut et in universo mundo est et fructificat et crescit sicut in vobis.*" (Cfr. Col. I, 23.)

least in some regions, may be seen from the remark of Tacitus⁹⁸ that during the Neronian persecution "an immense multitude" of Christians suffered martyrdom, and from the words of Clement of Rome, that "to these men with their holy lives [Peter and Paul] was gathered a large multitude of the chosen (πολὺ πλῆθος ἐκλεκτῶν), who were the victims of jealousy and offered among us the fairest example of their endurance under many indignities and tortures."⁹⁹

2. The Subapostolic Age

St. Ignatius of Antioch, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, speaks of "the bishops who have been appointed throughout the world."¹

Pliny attests the wide extension and great influence of Christianity in Asia Minor. "I have had recourse to your advice," he writes to the Emperor Trajan, "for the matter seemed to me a proper subject for consultation, especially on account of the number of the persons endangered. For many persons of all ages, of every

⁹⁸ *V. supra*, pp. 253 sqq.

⁹⁹ 1 *Ep. ad Cor.*, VI, 1; cfr. K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers* in the Loeb Classical Library, Vol. I, London, 1912, p. 19.

¹ *Ep. ad Eph.*, III, 2: τὰ πέρατα, sc. τῆς γῆς; K. Lake, l. c., p. 177; cfr. *Ep. ad Rom.*, VI, 1.

class, as well as of both sexes, are being, and will be, called into danger of their lives. Nor is it the cities only, but the villages and the country also, throughout which the infection of this superstition has spread. Yet it seems possible for it to be checked and amended. At all events it is well known that the temples which were already almost deserted, have begun to be thronged, and the customary rites which had been long neglected, to be resumed; and there is a market for the food of sacrificial beasts, buyers of which were hitherto very seldom to be met with. From this it is easy to gather what a multitude of persons can be brought into the right way if allowed room for repentance.”²

In the *Shepherd of Hermas* we read: “All the nations which dwell under heaven, when they

² *Ep. ad Traian.* (*Epp.*, l. X, 96, [97]): “*Visa est enim mihi res digna consultatione, maxime propter periclitantium numerum. Multi enim omnis aetatis, omnis ordinis, utriusque sexus etiam, vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur. Neque enim civitates tantum, sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est: quae videtur sisti et corrigi posse. Certe satis constat prope iam desolata templa coepisse celebrari, et sacra solemnia diu intermissa repeti, passimque venire victimas, quarum adhuc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur. Ex hoc facile est opinari, quae turba hominum emendari possit, si sit paenitentiae locus.*” (Cfr. C. R. Haines, *Heathen Contact with Christianity during its First Century and a Half*, Cambridge, 1923, p. 45.)

heard and believed, were called in the name of the Son of God.”³

St. Justin Martyr writes: “There is no class of men, whether we reckon them as Greeks or barbarians, or whatever other name we give them, whether they live constantly on wagons [Scythians] or have no habitations, or dwell as shepherds in tents, [there is no class of men, I say] among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of all things in the name of the crucified Jesus.”⁴

The acts of *St. Papyrus* record this declaration made by the holy martyr before his judges: “In every province and city [of Asia] I have children by the grace of God.”⁵

St. Irenaeus says: “The Church having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. . . . For the churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, or those in Gaul, nor in the East, nor those in Egypt, or those in Lybia, nor those which have been estab-

³ *Pastor Hermae*, Sim. IX, 17, 4; K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. II, London, 1913, p. 265.

⁴ *Dial. c. Tryph.*, n. 117 (Migne, *P.G.*, VI, 748 sq.)

⁵ *Mart. Carpi, Papyli*, etc., c. 32; ed. Harnack, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, III, 4; Leipsic, 1888.

lished in the central regions [probably referring to the churches in Palestine] of the world. But as the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlighteneth all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth.”⁶

Clement of Alexandria says: “The word of our Master did not remain in Judea alone, as philosophy did in Greece, but spread over the whole earth, was received by the nations of the Greeks and barbarians, in the villages as well as in the cities, and led to the truth entire households, as well as all individuals who had heard it, nay, even many philosophers.”⁷

Tertullian writes:⁸ “If we desired, indeed, to

⁶ *Contra Haereses*, I, 10, 2 (Migne, P.G., VII, 551 sq.); tr. from Roberts and Rambaut's version in *The Ante-Nicene Library, Writings of S. Irenaeus*, Vol. I, Edinburgh, 1868, p. 43.

⁷ *Stromata*, VI, 18 (P.G., IX, 400).

⁸ *Apolog.*, c. 37 (P.L., I, 462 sq.): “Si enim hostes exertos, non tantum vindices occultos agere vellemus, deesset nobis vis numerorum et copiarum? Plures nimirum Mauri et Marcomanni ipsique Parthi, vel quantaecumque unius tamen loci et suorum finium gentes, quam totius orbis! Hesterni sumus et vestra omnia implevimus, urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum; sola vobis reliquimus templa. . . . Cui bello non idonei, non prompti fuissetus, etiam impares copiis, qui tam libenter trucidamur, si non apud istam disciplinam magis occidi liceret, quam occidere? Potuimus,

act the part of open enemies, not merely of secret avengers, would there be any lacking in strength, whether of numbers or resources? The Moors, the Marcomanni, the Parthians themselves, or any single people, however great, inhabiting a distinct territory and confined within its own boundaries, surpasses forsooth, in numbers, one spread over all the world! We are but of yesterday, and we have filled every place among you—cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum;—we have left nothing to you but the temples [of your gods]. For what wars should we not be fit, not eager, even with unequal forces, we who so willingly yield ourselves to the sword, if in our religion it were not counted better to be slain than to slay? Without arms even, and raising no insurrectionary banner, but simply in enmity to you, we could carry on the contest with you by an ill-willed severance alone. For if such multitudes of men were to break away from you, and betake themselves to some remote corner of the world, why, the very loss of

et inermes, nec rebelles, sed tantummodo discordes, solius divortii invidia adversus vos dimicasse. Si enim tanta vis hominum in aliquem orbis remoti sinum abruptissemus a vobis, suffudisset utique dominationem vestram tot qualiumcumque amissio civium, imo etiam et ipsa destitutione punisset." (We quote Thelwall's translation, *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. XI, p. 116).

so many citizens, whatever sort they were, would cover the empire with shame." And again: "The outcry is that the State is filled with Christians—that they are in the fields, in the citadels, in the islands; they make lamentation as for some calamity, that both sexes, every age and condition, even high rank, are passing over to the profession of the Christian faith." ⁹

The *Emperor Maximinus Daza* wrote to one of his officials that Diocletian and Maximianus were fully justified in proceeding against the Christians, "since they saw that nearly everybody was giving up the worship of the immortal gods and joining the sect founded by Christ." ¹⁰

Some of the expressions in the above-quoted texts are not to be understood literally. Thus when we are told that Christianity had spread "in the whole world," or "among all nations," this manifestly applies only to the world and the nations then known. The statements regarding the numerical proportion between pagans and Christians are not always free from exaggeration. This much is certain, however, that towards the close of the third century the Chris-

⁹ *Op. cit.*, c. 1 (P. L., I, 262 sq.): "*Obsessam vociferantur civitatem, in agris, in castellis, in insulis Christianos; omnem sexum, aetatem, conditionem, etiam dignitatem transgredi ad hoc nomen.*" (Thelwall's transl., l. c., p. 54.)

¹⁰ Eusebius, *H. E.*, IX, 9 (P. G., XX, 824 sq.)

tian religion flourished not only throughout the Roman Empire, but far beyond its confines among different nations, in the cities as well as in the country, and that the number of professing Christians was large.

That the Christian religion spread with extraordinary rapidity in the course of the first three centuries is a historical fact freely admitted even by those who will not concede that there was anything miraculous about its expansion. Thus Harnack writes: "Did Christianity expand with surprising rapidity? Though we have but little parallel material for purposes of comparison with other religions in the Roman Empire, I am inclined to answer this question affirmatively. The impression which the Church Fathers of the fourth century (Arnobius, Eusebius, Augustine) had, that their faith had spread from generation to generation with incomprehensible rapidity, was well founded. Seventy years after the establishment of the first congregation of Jewish converts in Antioch (Syria), Pliny writes in the strongest terms of the expansion of Christianity in far distant Pontus and regards the other cults in that province as imperilled. Seventy years later the controversy regarding the celebration of Easter shows the existence of a Christian ecclesiastical confederation.

tion reaching from Lyons to Edessa. And after another seventy years the Emperor Decius declares that he would rather tolerate a rival emperor in Rome than a Christian bishop, and in less than seventy more years the cross is affixed to the Roman field standards.”¹¹

The Social Complexion of the Christian Community.—The first followers of Christ were for the most part recruited from the ranks of the common people. St. Paul wrote: “For contemplate your own call, brethren; not many of you are wise according to the flesh, not many are powerful, not many of good birth. Nay the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world God hath chosen so as to put to shame the men of wisdom, and the base things of the world, aye, the things that are despised, the things that are not, God hath chosen, so as to bring to nought things that are: lest any flesh should vaunt itself in his sight.”¹² But there

¹¹ *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Vol. II, 4th ed., Leipsic, 1924, pp. 956 sq. On pp. 529 sqq. of the same volume Dr. Harnack quotes the most important contemporary testimonies for the spread of Christianity.

¹² 1 Cor. I, 26 sqq.: “*Videte enim vocationem vestram, fratres, quia non multi sapientes secundum carnem, non multi potentes, non multi nobiles: sed quae stulta sunt mundi, elegit Deus, ut confundat sapientes, et infirma mundi elegit Deus, ut confundat fortia,*

were also some socially prominent and highly educated Christians, *e. g.*, among the Jewish converts: Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, the Apostle Paul himself, Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, the eloquent Apollo of Alexandria,¹³ "a great multitude of priests,"¹⁴ "some of the sect of the Pharisees,"¹⁵ and, finally, those to whom the admonitions in the Epistle of St. James are addressed.¹⁶ Among the converts from paganism: the centurion Cornelius,¹⁷ the proconsul Sergius Paulus,¹⁸ Dionysius the Areopagite,¹⁹ "not a few noble women" in Thessalonica and Beroea,²⁰ and the consul Titus Flavius Clemens and his wife Domitilla.²¹ That Christianity had adherents among many of the noble families of Rome may be seen from the inscriptions found by De Rossi in the Catacombs. P. Allard gives a brief survey of them

et ignobilia mundi et contemptibilia elegit Deus et ea quae non sunt, ut ea quae sunt destrueret, ut non gloriatur omnis caro in conspectu eius."

¹³ Acts XVIII, 24.

¹⁴ Acts VI, 7.

¹⁵ Acts XV, 5.

¹⁶ James II, 1 sqq., V, 1 sqq.; cfr. O. Bardenhewer, *Der Brief des hl. Jakobus*, Freiburg i. B., 1928, pp. 58 sqq., 132 sqq.

¹⁷ Acts X, 1 sqq.

¹⁸ Acts XIII, 7-12.

¹⁹ Acts XVII, 34.

²⁰ Acts XVII, 4, 12.

²¹ Cfr. Dio Cassius, *Hist. Rom.*, LXVII, 14; ed. Sturz, Leipsic, 1824, IV, 278 sqq.

as follows: "In the cemetery governed by Callistus [the latter of the two popes bearing this name, who ruled from 217 to 222] the leading families of Rome are represented. One finds there the funerary marbles of the Caecilii, the Cornelii, the Aemilii, the Bassi, the Annii, the Iallii, the Pomponii; one sees there the tombs of the relatives of the imperial families. As there were Christian Flavii in the first century, so there were Christian Antonini at the close of the second and the beginning of the third century."²² How widely Christianity was spread among the upper classes about the middle of the third century, may be seen from an edict of the Emperor Valerian issued in 258.²³ This

²² *Histoire des Persécutions pendant la Première Moitié du Troisième Siècle*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1894, p. 191: "Dans le cimetière que gouverna Calliste, les plus grandes familles de Rome sont représentées. On y trouve les marbres funéraires de Caecilii, de Cornelii, d'Aemilii, de Bassi, d'Annii, d'Iallii, de Pomponii; on y rencontre des tombeaux d'alliés des familles impériales. Comme au premier siècle il y avait eu des Flaviens chrétiens, à la fin du deuxième et au commencement du troisième il y eut des Antonins chrétiens."

²³ Cyprian, *Ep.*, 80, 1 (*Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum*, Vienna, 1866 sqq., Vol. III, ed. Hartel, pp. 839 sq.): ". . . ut . . . senatores et egregii viri et equites Romani dignitate amissa etiam bonis spoliuntur et, si adeptis facultatibus Christiani [esse] perseveraverint, capite quoque multentur, matronae adeptis bonis in exilium relegentur, Caesariani autem, quicumque vel prius confessi fuerant vel nunc confessi fuerint, confiscentur et vincti in caesarianas possessiones descripti mittantur." (P.L., IV, 429 sq.)

agrees with what the Christian rhetor Arnobius says (about 304) in an appeal to the pagans.²⁴

It is an indisputable fact, therefore, that the religion of Christ spread with remarkable rapidity throughout the then known world and permeated all classes of society during the first three centuries after its establishment.

B. The Supernatural Character of the Rapid Expansion of Christianity

The extraordinarily rapid spread of the Christian religion must have had an adequate cause. That this cause must have been at least partly supernatural follows from the lack of proportion between the purely natural means by which Christianity was propagated and the enormous obstacles which it had to overcome. To show this lack of proportion clearly, we will first consider the obstacles that hindered, and then the natural causes that favored the spread of Christianity.

²⁴ *Adv. Gent.*, II, 5 (Migne, *P. L.*, V, 816): "*Nonne vel haec saltem fidem vobis faciunt argumenta credendi, . . . quod tam magnis ingeniis praediti oratores, grammatici, rhetores, consulti iuris et medici, philosophiae etiam secreta rimantes, magisteria haec expetunt, spretis quibus paulo ante fidebant?*"

I. Obstacles Impeding the Spread of Christianity

These obstacles were partly internal, connected with the nature of Christianity, partly external, based upon the character of the nations among which the new religion first began to spread.

a) *The internal obstacles* arose from the Person and doctrine of Jesus Christ and from the exclusive character of Christianity.

The *Personality of Christ*, in spite of its many sublime traits, was, humanly speaking, an obstacle to the spread of the religion which He founded. He, the scion of a despised race, who had been condemned to death by His fellow-Jews and shamefully crucified by Roman soldiers, demanded divine worship and adoration. Such a demand was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles folly."²⁵ Though the hope in the promised Messiah was widely spread among both Jews and Gentiles, no one expected salvation to come from a man who had been crucified as a common malefactor.

The *doctrines* preached by the heralds of the new faith also offered serious difficulties. In-

²⁵ Cfr. 1 Cor. I, 23.

tellectually, they required belief in incomprehensible mysteries and demanded the greatest possible sacrifices from men who were strongly addicted to selfishness and luxurious living. While paganism permitted its votaries to gratify their selfish passions and the example of the gods themselves encouraged them in the pursuit of pleasure, the Christians, on the contrary, were obliged to practice self-denial and humility, and to love all men, including their enemies.

To this must be added the exclusiveness of Christianity, which, in contradistinction to the dogmatic tolerance allowed by the pagan religions,²⁶ proscribed every non-Christian cult

²⁶ Pagan worshippers were most catholic in their tastes in giving recognition to as many deities of diverse origin as they fancied. "The Emperor Alexander Severus honored in his private chapel Orpheus, Abraham, Apollonius of Tyana together with Jesus Christ (Lampridius, *Alex. Severus*, 29). Ancient tombstones testify to this mingled devotion to deities of Greece and Rome and the Orient. . . . Apollonius of Tyana visited many temples and oracles within and without the Roman Empire. Apuleius sought initiation into several mysteries. Plutarch's Clea was an attendant on the Delphic Dionysus and an initiate of Isis (Plut., *De Is. et Os.*, 35). Tatian (*Ad Graecos*, 29) in his search for the truth, sought initiation into several mysteries. Praetextatus and his wife had taken the sacraments in various mystery-societies. (*Corpus Inscript. Lat.*, VI, 1, 1779). Even the priest-hoods were not exclusive; the same individual might be a priest of the Phrygian and Persian cults as well as an official in the state cult. Among the deities there was no jealousy; several might

and forbade its followers to practice *communicatio in sacris*.

(b) *The external obstacles* lay mainly in the violent opposition which both the Jews and the pagans offered to the spread of the Christian religion.

The *Jews* still regarded themselves as the Chosen People of God, and were forbidden to have any religious intercourse with the pagans. Their religion was revealed by God and confirmed by miracles and prophecies. They tenaciously adhered to their traditional usages and customs, and centered all their hopes upon the Messias, who, as a powerful king, was expected to restore Israel's national independence and to make Jerusalem the capital of a world empire.

The *pagans* were deterred from embracing Christianity by beliefs which they had inherited from their ancestors and which placed no restraint upon their passions. These beliefs permeated and governed their private and public life,

be accommodated in one temple, or the deity to whom a temple was dedicated might admit lesser deities who had some hold on the affection of his votaries. In the Isium of Pompeii stood statues of Dionysus, Venus, and Priapus (Mau, *Pompeii*, p. 169; Lafaye, *Hist. du Culte des Divinités d'Alexandrie*, Paris, 1884, p. 190). In a Mithraeum at Ostia, Italian and Greek deities were venerated. (Cfr. S. Angus, *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity; A Study in the Background of Early Christianity*, new ed., London and New York, 1928, p. 192).

and stood in closest relation to the historical development, the civic institutions, the laws and ceremonials of each individual nation. Quite naturally the priests of the various pagan cults did everything in their power to perpetuate their prerogatives. In this they were enthusiastically supported by the secular rulers, who on certain public occasions were wont to act as high priests, or at least were firmly convinced that the welfare of the State depended on the favor of the gods. The representatives of culture, more especially the philosophers, on their part, sought to cast suspicion upon the Christian religion and branded it as a superstition altogether unworthy of educated men.²⁷

For Jews as well as Gentiles the acceptance of the Christian religion was made even more difficult by the calumnies launched against Jesus and His followers. The Christians were denounced as "enemies of the commonwealth," as atheists, and as fools who worshipped an ass.²⁸ They

²⁷ Cfr. J. J. I. Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*, tr. by N. Darnell, Vol. II, pp. 183 sqq.

²⁸ Cfr. Tertullian, *Apolog.*, c. 35 (*P. L.*, I, 452 sqq.); Justin, *Apolog.*, I, 6 (*P. G.*, VI, 336); Tertullian, *Apolog.*, c. 16 (*P. L.*, I, 364 sqq.); *Ad Nat.*, I, 11 (*P. L.*, I, 577); Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, c. 9 (*P. L.*, III, 260 sq.). On the "*Graffito blasfemo*," a caricature of the crucifixion discovered in 1856 beneath the ruins of the Palatine palace (the figure on the cross bears an ass's head, before which stands a Christian in the posture of

slaughtered infants at their meetings, it was charged,²⁹ and ate the flesh. If the Empire or any province or city was visited by misfortune, the Christians were usually blamed for it on the ground that they did not pay due respect to the gods.³⁰

However, the greatest of all the obstacles that hampered the spread of Christianity were the bloody persecutions which, during the first three centuries, in almost unbroken sequence threatened with banishment, torture, and death all who professed the religion of the despised Nazarene.

2. Natural Causes Favoring the Expansion of Christianity

The natural means and instruments employed in the expansion of Christianity were quite insignificant. The first heralds of the Gospel, the Apostles and their coadjutors, during whose lifetime the Christian religion spread through the then known world, were, with few exceptions,

adoration) see Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, 5th ed., St. Louis, 1925, p. 105, and Garrucci, *Il Crocifisso Graffito*, Rome, 1857.

²⁹ Justin Martyr, *Apolog.*, II, 12 (*P. G.*, VI, 464 sq.) ; Tertullian, *Apolog.*, c. 7 (*P. L.*, I, 506 sqq.) ; Minucius Felix, *Octavius*. I. c.

³⁰ Cfr. Tertullian, *Ad Nat.*, I, 9 (*P. L.*, I, 571 sq.) ; *Apolog.*, c. 40 (*P. L.*, I, 478 sqq.)

plain, unlettered men of the lower classes. They belonged to a race which was universally loathed, and lacked all those superior advantages which might have promised success to their efforts. They possessed neither power nor fame, neither wealth nor eloquence. The only means they had at their command was the simple preaching of Christ crucified and the zeal with which they promoted His cause. There was nothing to attract the masses to Christianity. It held out to them no material gain, no public honors, no sensual pleasures or promise of earthly prosperity. True, the followers of Jesus hoped for eternal happiness in the world to come, but this hope was encouraged also by other religions³¹ and, therefore, could not be regarded as a specific attraction of Christianity.

Synopsis and Conclusion

A rapid survey of the argument just developed shows, on the one hand, a fact unique in the history of mankind, an effect of the most extraordinary sort: in every portion of the world count-

³¹ Cfr. S. Angus, *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity*, pp. 139 sqq., 176 sq., 230-234.

less men and women of every class and condition were turning towards a religion which made the highest demands upon human nature, was universally hated and despised, and bitterly opposed and combated everywhere. On the other hand, we find, as the natural cause of this effect, only the unimpressive activity and preaching of a few ordinary men from the ranks of the common people. This cause is out of all proportion to the effect produced. Since, however, every effect must have an adequate cause, and diabolical influences are excluded by the very nature of the case, we must assume that the natural causes which were at work and which can explain only a very small proportion of the effects, must have been supplemented by a supernatural cause, which is chiefly responsible for the conversion of the ancient world to Christianity. Therefore, the Christian religion must be of divine origin.³²

³² The extraordinary character of this phenomenon is admitted even by Rationalist critics. Thus Paulsen (*System der Ethik*, Vol. I, 9th ed., p. 102, Berlin, 1913) says: "Among all the events of which history has preserved a record, none is more astonishing than the conversion of the ancient world to Christianity. There has never been an intellectual movement which so appeared to lack everything that enables a movement to conquer the world, as Christianity."

C. The Attempted Natural Explanation of the Expansion of Christianity

The enemies of Christianity attempt to explain its rapid expansion by enumerating a series of natural causes and pointing to analogous phenomena in the history of other religions, which no one would think of describing as supernatural. However, a careful examination of the evidence shows that both these claims are unfounded.

1. *Natural Causes which Favored the Spread of Christianity.* The natural causes which favored and are said to explain the rapid spread of Christianity without recourse to supernatural agencies are the following:

a) *The exemplary life of the first Christians, their heroism and practical charity.*³³ This argument is based on the assumption that the extraordinary piety of the first Christians was a purely natural phenomenon, which assumption is, as we shall show presently, altogether unfounded. The sudden, complete, and permanent change of life adopted by so many converts, and

³³ See the detailed account *apud* Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, Vol. I, 4th ed., pp. 170-239. English tr. by James Moffatt, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, Vol. I, London, 1908, pp. 181-273.

the moral heroism which they showed in the midst of a corrupt world, is such an extraordinary phenomenon, so contrary to the customs, habits, and inclinations of ordinary men, that natural causes are not sufficient to explain it. Besides it must be remembered that there were among the early Christians not a few men of wealth and high social position who certainly were not attracted by the charity dispensed by the followers of Jesus. Finally, we must take into consideration the fact that the hope of receiving alms could not have exerted much influence upon the poorer classes, when any man who embraced the Christian religion literally risked his life.

b) *The doctrine of the equality of all men before God* naturally awakened the hope of liberty and, as a consequence, aroused great enthusiasm among the slaves, whose number at that time was very large. But this doctrine was intimately bound up with the extremely high ethical demands of Christianity, which stood in the sharpest possible contrast to the moral corruption of the slaves, especially in Greece and Italy. Add to this the consideration that Christianity, during the first centuries of its existence, did not demand the abrogation of slavery, in fact could not do so without conjuring up the peril of a univer-

sal revolt, which would have destroyed the entire social, economic, and civil order of that time. The abolition of slavery, it is true, was a logical postulate of the Christian conception of manhood, but it could not be brought about at once, least of all at a time when Christianity was regarded as an enemy by the pagan State. Therefore, while the persecutions lasted, Christianity had to content itself with admonishing the slaves, after the example of St. Paul, to obey their masters, no matter whether these were Christians or pagans, and to leave their enfranchisement entirely to the good will of the latter.³⁴

c) *The union of many nations under the suzerainty of Rome.*³⁵ The unity of the Roman Em-

³⁴ 1 Tim. VI, 1 sq.; 1 Cor. VII, 20 sqq.; Eph. VI, 5 sq. Cfr. J. L. Balmes, *Protestantism and Catholicism Compared*, Baltimore, 1850, Vol. I. Ignatius Martyr (*Ep. ad Polyc.*, IV, 3) says: "Do not be haughty to slaves, either men or women; yet do not let them be puffed up, but let them rather endure slavery to the glory of God, that they may obtain a better freedom from God. Let them not desire to be set free at the Church's expense, that they may not be found the slaves of lust." (Ed. Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. I, pp. 272 sq.) As late as 324, the Council of Gangra in Asia Minor (can. 3) decreed that "If anyone, under the pretense of piety, induces a slave to despise his master and to run away from his service, and not to serve his master with a good will and due reverence, let him be anathema." (Mansi, *Concil. Coll.*, II, 1101).

³⁵ Harnack, *op. cit.*, I, 23 sqq.; Engl. tr. by Moffatt, Vol. I, pp. 25 sqq.

pire, the roads connecting all the provinces with the capital, and the vastly improved means of interprovincial and interurban communication resulting therefrom, no doubt aided the spread of the Christian religion. But while all these things served to make the new religion more widely known, they did not induce people to embrace it, which is the point here at issue. All the difficulties in the way of conversion remained in full force. The spread of the Gospel was a *conditio sine qua non* of conversion, not a cause productive of converts. Besides, the facility of interprovincial and interurban communication promoted not only the expansion of Christianity, but also the more effective persecution of the Christians during the first three centuries.

d) *Christianity*, it is said further, *adapted itself to the existing religious syncretism*, borrowed viable and fertile concepts from other religions, and by the aid of these developed its own dogmatic system.³⁶ If this theory were correct, it would be impossible to explain the opposition in which Christianity found itself, not only at the start, but also in the course of the following centuries, to the different religions with which it came in contact. Had there really been

³⁶ Cfr. Harnack, *l. c.*; F. Heiler, *Der Katholizismus, seine Idee und seine Erscheinung*, Munich, 1923, pp. 595-621.

a complete fusion between Christianity and the existing religions, as has been asserted, the result would have been a friendly relationship between them, not a bloody persecution of the new religion by the votaries of the older cults. Nor is it possible to explain what truths Christianity might have borrowed from the pagan syncretism of the age. For all the concepts which are mentioned as having been borrowed (*e. g.*, "soul," "God," "knowledge," "expiation," "ascetics," "redemption," "eternal life")³⁷ formed part and parcel of the dogmatic teaching of Christianity as early as the Apostolic age, and it cannot be shown that Christ or the Apostles borrowed them from other religions or from the writings of the Greek philosophers.

2. *Analogous Phenomena in the History of Other Religions.* In order to show that natural causes are fully sufficient to explain the rapid expansion of Christianity, the champions of this theory point to certain other religions which, as all admit, spread with great rapidity. These religions are: Buddhism, Mithraism, Moham-
medanism, and Protestantism.³⁸ In the working

³⁷ Harnack, *op. cit.*, I, 36; Engl. tr. by Moffatt, I, 36.

³⁸ Whether Protestantism represents the true or a false form of Christianity is a question with which we are not concerned at present; the point at issue here is the rapidity of its spread.

of this parallel, however, the circumstances under which these religions developed are left entirely out of the reckoning. There is a fundamental difference between Christianity and the religions just named. Not one of them imposed such heavy burdens, not one had to contend with so many difficulties, and not one disposed of so few means of propaganda as Christianity. Therefore, it will not do to put Christianity on a par with these religions in regard to rapidity of expansion. A short survey will show this more plainly.

a) *Buddhism*.—Buddhism, in its popular form, which alone attained to considerable popularity, was not, like Christianity, impeded by the exclusiveness of its doctrines and worship, but readily absorbed the views and customs, the polytheism and superstition of the nations among which it spread.³⁹ Its ethical code was far less exacting than that of Christianity, since Buddhism was originally atheistic and consequently had no authority to impose moral obligations.⁴⁰ Moreover, Buddhism, unlike Christianity, never had to undergo bloody persecutions, but from the beginning of its existence

³⁹ Cfr. Vol. I of this *Handbook*, pp. 135 sq.; E. Hardy, *Der Buddhismus*, 2nd ed., Münster, 1919, pp. 18 sqq.

⁴⁰ Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

enjoyed the protection of the secular power,⁴¹ and its extension was mightily promoted by the efforts of King Asoka, who lived about 150 years after the death of Sākyamuni (263–222 B. C.), the founder of Buddhism.⁴²

b) *Mithraism*.—Of the comparative growth of Christianity and the religion of the Persian Mithra, F. Cumont says: "These two religions spread with equal rapidity, and at the close of the second century they both had followers in the most remote parts of the Roman world. The disciples of Mithra could justly have adopted the hyperbolic phrase of Tertullian: 'We are of yesterday and fill all your possessions.'"⁴³ But

⁴¹ Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁴² Hardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 104 sqq. Cfr. De Broglie, *Problèmes et Conclusions de l'Histoire des Religions*, 4th ed., Paris, 1904, pp. 194 sqq., 360 sqq.; also Vol. I of this *Handbook*, pp. 209, 238 sq.; also this present volume, *infra*, pp. 672 sqq.

⁴³ F. Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, tr. by F. J. McCormack, 2nd ed., Chicago, 1910. Cumont is the leading authority on Mithraism. *Textes et Monuments relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra* (2 vols., Brussels, 1896–99) is his principal work on the subject. *The Mystery of Mithra* is smaller and exists in an English translation, which, however, is out of print. We translate from the 3rd French edition, Paris, 1913. Cyril C. Martindale, S.J., in his essay "Mithra" in Vol. II of *The History of Religions*, published by the Catholic Truth Society of England (unfortunately also out of print), regrets that we have no English book which treats of Mithraism in a way that could satisfy, without misleading, the general reader. Fr. Martindale's own essay is the best available; the next best, perhaps, is the chapter on "Mithra and Mithraism"

the causes of the rapid spread of Mithraism differed *toto caelo* from those that promoted the expansion of Christianity. The cult of Mithra, (α) because of its syncretistic tendency, everywhere adapted itself to the environment in which it took root, as may be seen from the still extant ruins of its temples in Italy and Phrygia, along the Rhine, and in the valley of the Danube. (β) The sun-worship of Mithraism originated in the philosophical doctrine that the heavenly bodies were living divine beings. The worship of the emperors had an intimate connection with the adoration of the *Sol invictus*, of which the Roman rulers claimed to be emanations. (γ) Mithraism was spread without opposition mainly by slaves, soldiers, and public officials, along the frontiers of the Empire. The emperors themselves were its most zealous promoters. Aurelian officially introduced the cult of the "Invincible Sun" in 273, and Diocletian, together with his fellow-regents, Galerius and Licinius, dedicated a sanctuary to "Mithra, the protector of his empire,"⁴⁴ in 307, at Carnuntum on the Danube (δ) Mithraism had no per-

in Sir Bertram C. A. Windle's work, *On Miracles and Some Other Matters*, London and New York, 1924, pp. 121-143.

⁴⁴ "Mithrae, fautori imperii sui." Cfr. F. Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, tr. by G. Showerman, Chicago, 1911, pp. 114 sq., 150.

secutions to undergo down to the middle of the fourth century. When, soon after the death of Julian the Apostate, who was himself an enthusiastic devotee of the cult, a persecution broke out against Mithraism, it succumbed to the first attack,—a clear proof that the religion of Mithra bore no essential resemblance to Christianity, which grew strongest and spread most rapidly when it was most violently assailed.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Cfr. F. Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*; J. Blötzer, S.J., "Das heidnische Mysterienwesen und die Hellenisierung des Christentums" in *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, Vol. LXXII (1907), pp. 39 sqq.; A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of Christ*, Appendix VI, "Christianity and the Mystery Religions," pp. 270-284, London, 1926; L. Paterson, *Mithraism and Christianity*, Cambridge, 1921. The last-mentioned author relies too much on writers like Loisy and J. M. Robertson (cfr. Windle, *op. cit.*, p. 121). S. Angus, *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity: A Study in the Religious Background of Early Christianity* (new edition, London and New York, 1928), refers to Mithra and Mithraism in a number of passages (pp. 20, 38, 66, 81, 88 sqq., 97, 120, 122, 135, 147, 157, 246, 310), but is uncritical in making it appear that Christianity borrowed some of its most important features from Mithraism. Paterson, Martindale, and Windle (*op. cit.*) show up the exaggerated character of these alleged parallels. The "virgin birth" of Mithra, for instance, can be brought to anything like the meaning attached to the term by Christian writers only by an unaccountable stretch of words (Paterson, *op. cit.*, p. 13). The birthday of Mithra was fixed on Dec. 25. This is a point not yet fully cleared up. Fr. Martindale (*Cath. Encyclopedia*, s.v.) thinks "the same instinct which set *Natalis Invicti* at the winter solstice would have sufficed, apart from deliberate adaptation or curious calculation, to set the Christian feast there too." Mithra is said to have been invoked as the Incarnate Word, but Paterson points out that this term was often

c) *Mohammedanism*.—The rapid spread of Islam was entirely due to natural causes. Mohammedanism (α) pandered to sensuality by permitting polygamy here on earth and promising a paradise of sensual delight in the world beyond. (β) It was propagated, not by instruction and conviction, but with fire and sword. Whereas Christianity preached self-denial, patience, and love of enemy, Mohammedanism encouraged pleasure-seeking and promised those who fell in battle the joys of a *quasi-material* paradise.

d) *Protestantism*.—Protestantism found so much favor upon its first appearance that it was

used for an ordinary priest (*op. cit.*, p. 17). Between the Mithraic ceremony (if it was Mithraic; there is some doubt on this point) of the *taurobolium* (slaying of the bull) and the Christian baptism of blood there is no traceable connection. Whatever may have been the resemblances between the Christian Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist) and certain practices of Mithraism, it is quite certain that the underlying notions, aside from the general idea of purification, were totally different. Mithraism is said to have taught adherence to the truth and urged abstinence and purity; yet Fr. Martindale, who is an authority on the subject, says: "In no case have we any evidence of a true code or system of ethics, or any trace (historically verifiable) of moral effort or ideal which can bear any relation to the Christian, save that of a will-o'-the-wisp to the noonday sun." This observation, in the opinion of Dr. Windle, also no mean authority, "is the high-water mark of what may be said, with any truth, of all the alleged resemblances" between Mithraism and Christianity. (*On Miracles*, p. 143).

able to spread over the greater part of Europe in less than a century. The chief causes of its rapid expansion were: (α) The nature of the new religion itself, which dispensed its followers from the duty of obedience to ecclesiastical authority and allowed the laity to share in the privileges of a universal priesthood. The so-called Reformers abolished auricular confession, sacerdotal celibacy, and monastic vows, declared self-denial, mortification, and the performance of good works to be useless, and demanded nothing more than fiduciary faith, *i. e.*, confident hope in Christ and His merits. By allowing the old religious ceremonies to continue, the Protestant sects deceived the common people as to the true condition of affairs and gradually paved the way for the acceptance of the new religion. (β) The principal cause of the rapid spread of Protestantism were the favorable external circumstances under which it entered the world. The abuses that had crept in and the high taxes imposed upon the faithful by the curia, had created general dissatisfaction with Rome and the hierarchy. Moreover, the excessive wealth of the Church in some countries, notably in Germany, the birthplace of the new religion, had resulted in the episcopal sees being mostly held by scions of the nobility, who,

lacking a true vocation to the ecclesiastical state, regarded their offices merely as sources of pecuniary profit and of social and political prestige. The lower clergy in some regions were extremely poor, ignorant, and degraded. Thus the soil was well prepared for the Protestant revolt. The eloquent appeals of the so-called Reformers found willing listeners and were, moreover, strongly supported by the literary campaign of the younger Humanists against Scholasticism and the Church, and by the co-operation of many of the secular rulers, who coveted the possessions of the dioceses and monasteries and forced their subjects to adopt the Protestant religion.⁴⁶

Hence no true parallel can be drawn between the rapid spread of Christianity and that of Protestantism, for while Christianity lacked almost all the natural means of expansion, Protestantism had a wealth of them at its command.

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II. *The Heroism of the Martyrs*

1. Broadly speaking, every person who embraces the Christian religion can be regarded as a witness (μάρτυρ) of its divine character. According to theological usage, however, the term *martyr* is applied only to those who have sealed their testimony to the truth and divine origin of Christianity by a violent death.

2. The heroic fortitude of the martyrs is a proof of the divine origin of Christianity in so far as it was not the result of natural power and energy of the will, but a supernatural, divine

effect, a miracle in the moral order. However, it is not the heroism of the martyrs *per se* which we regard as a proof of the divinity of the Christian religion, but the fact that it was displayed under precisely the circumstances which history records.

3. Therefore, we have first to demonstrate the *fact* of the heroic fortitude of the martyrs, and, secondly, that it had a supernatural, divine cause. The latter point being established, it follows, since God cannot positively contribute to the spread of a false religion, that Christianity must be a divine institution.

We maintain that the heroic fortitude of the martyrs under the circumstances in which they laid down their lives for the faith, is a proof of the divine origin of the Christian religion.

If the heroic fortitude of the martyrs in testifying to their conviction of the truth of Christianity is a supernatural effect, which *per se* serves the profession, preservation, and expansion of the Christian religion, then, according to the teaching of its Founder, that religion must be accepted as divine. Now, the fortitude of the martyrs is such a supernatural effect. Therefore, the Christian religion must be accepted as divine.

*A. The Heroic Fortitude of the Martyrs
as a Supernatural Phenomenon*

The extraordinary fortitude shown by the Christian martyrs appears all the more impressive, the greater was their number, the more terrible were the tortures they endured, and the nobler the spirit with which they suffered for the faith.

I. The Number of the Martyrs

The number of those who laid down their lives for the Christian faith during the first three centuries was very large. Tacitus writes that "an immense multitude" were put to death under Nero.⁴⁷ Dio Cassius says that "Domitian put to death many others."⁴⁸ Trajan (98-117) inaugurated a persecution in the course of which "many of the faithful endured martyrdom in various ways."⁴⁹ Under Marcus Aurelius (161-180) myriads (*μυριάδας μαρτύρων*) died for their faith all over the world.⁵⁰ We have similar reports concerning the persecutions that took place under

⁴⁷ *Annal.*, XV, 44.

⁴⁸ *Hist. Rom.*, LXVII, 14.

⁴⁹ Eusebius, *H. E.*, III, 33; *Loeb Classical Library*, tr. by K. Lake, *Eusebius*, Vol. I, pp. 278 f.

⁵⁰ Eusebius, *H. E.*, V, 1; *Loeb Classical Library*, l. c., pp. 404 sq.

Septimius Severus, Decius, Gallus, and Valerian. The most brutal persecutor of all was Diocletian (284-305), under whom thirty, sixty, nay, a hundred Christians were often executed in one day, so that, as Eusebius says, "the swords grew dull and broke, and the executioners had to take turns from sheer exhaustion."⁵¹

The total number of the martyrs cannot be estimated with any degree of accuracy, as no statistics were kept and many of the earliest "acts" were destroyed by the enemies of the Church. That the number was very large may be inferred from the statement of the Roman Martyrology that no less than 13,825 Christians were martyred in the city of Rome alone, including men and women of every age, class, and profession.⁵² Lactantius says that so many Christians were burned at the stake that the executioners could not find time to slay them singly, but grouped them together and burned them in one great fire. Thousands died in exile, in prison, and in the mines. Great numbers were killed by wild beasts in the amphitheatres. Others were crucified, drowned or died under torture. The Roman law permitted slaveholders to punish their slaves with death. Thus

⁵¹ *H. E.*, VIII, 9.

⁵² Cfr. Dionysius of Alexandria, *Ep. ad Domitium et Didymum*,

many Christian slaves were undoubtedly martyred, but the fact was never recorded. Notaries were appointed at Rome in the early days to keep records of martyrdoms, but most of these records were unfortunately destroyed during the persecution under Diocletian. Marucchi estimates the number of martyrs at "hundreds of thousands, and perhaps several millions." ⁵²

2. The Terrible Tortures Endured by the Martyrs

The tortures which the martyrs endured for the faith were extremely variegated and painful. This was attributable partly to the severity of the pagan laws, which inflicted cruel punishment for the crimes with which the Christians were usually charged, *e. g.*, *lèse majesté*; partly to the cruelty of the judges, who wished to make themselves popular with the masses who hated the Christians; and partly also to the purpose of the pagan authorities to force the accused Christians by long-drawn-out and severe tortures to

quoted by Eusebius, *H. E.*, VII, 11; Lactantius, *De Morte Persecutorum*, XV (*P. L.*, VII, 216); O. Marucchi and E. S. Berry, *Catholic Library, Archeology Series*, Vol. IV, *The Early Martyrs*, ed. by R. McEachen, Wheeling, W. Va., 1921, esp. p. 196; E. C. E. Owen, *Some Authentic Acts of the Early Martyrs*, Oxford, 1927.

deny their faith. The victims were subjected to manifold punishments: they were crucified, hung up by the hands or feet with weights tied to their limbs, their bones were broken upon the wheel, they were scourged, their flesh was lacerated with iron hooks, they were seared with red-hot metal plates and torches, or cremated in stoves, or at the stake, or in pans or kettles, roasted on grates, decapitated, pierced with arrows, their bellies ripped open with hooks and the entrails fed to the hogs; they were exposed to wild beasts, or buried alive, or condemned to work in the mines or on public buildings, and so forth.⁵³

3. The Sublime Fortitude of the Martyrs

The martyrs of every age and class and of both sexes suffered all these torments, not only without a trace of impatience and repugnance, but, on the contrary, with genuine joy. They steadfastly endured the most cruel tortures in spite of the alluring promises held out to them if they would deny the faith. By a single word or

⁵³ F. X. Kraus, *Real-Enzyklopädie der christl. Altertümer*, Vol. II, Freiburg, 1886, pp. 372 sqq., with the necessary documentary evidence. Cfr. James Bridge in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XI, pp. 707-711; P. Allard, *Ten Lectures on the Martyrs*, London, 1907, pp. 215 sqq.

gesture they might have obtained their liberty, honor, and the respect of their fellowmen, not infrequently riches and a life of luxury, public offices and dignities, nay, even the favor of the imperial court. But they preferred to renounce every earthly advantage and suffered a cruel death rather than deny the faith.

This attitude was not the result of lack of sympathy or of dullness. For among the martyrs there were cultured and wealthy as well as ignorant and poor people. Nor can their behavior be ascribed to fanaticism or uncontrolled enthusiasm. This may be seen from the calmness and serenity of mind with which the martyrs met death, the humility and modesty with which they suffered,—not depending on their own strength, but relying on the help of God, they hoped to win in the terrible struggle. Moreover, it would be impossible to explain how exaltation and fanaticism could have spread so widely throughout the Roman Empire and lasted for three hundred years.

B. The Supernatural Character of This Phenomenon

Experience teaches that human nature has a strong repugnance to bodily pain, especially if

it is inflicted upon the organism from without by cutting, burning, etc. It is justly regarded as a proof of extraordinary will-power if one is able to undergo a surgical operation while fully conscious and without flinching. A man must be a real hero to allow himself to be slowly tortured to death. There are men who possess this power of the will and iron nerves as a gift of nature, but they are few and far between.

Among the Christian martyrs we meet with a very large number of persons of both sexes and of every age, class, and profession, who, without a sufficient natural motive, exhibit such power and courage, not only at one time and in one place, but for three long centuries and throughout the Roman Empire.

The world had never witnessed such an extraordinary spectacle before. The scenes enacted in the course of the various persecutions exceeded the capacity of unaided human nature. Unless we are willing to admit an effect without an adequate cause, we must admit that divine forces were at work here. None other could enter into a case where there was question of a religion which paganism persecuted as its deadliest enemy.

The martyrs themselves, their brethren in the faith, and even many of the pagans who attended

these scenes of heroism, were convinced that it was God who gave them courage and patience to endure their cruel sufferings with equanimity. When St. Felicitas, who was already suffering intense agony, was asked by her jailer what she would do when face to face with the wild beasts, she answered: "Now *I* suffer what I suffer; but then *Another* will be in me who will suffer for me, because I too am ready to suffer for Him." ⁵⁴ Lactantius says of the pagans: "When the people see that men are lacerated by various kinds of tortures, and that they retain their patience unsubdued while the executioners are wearied, they think, as is really the case, that neither the agreement of so many nor the constancy of the dying could surmount such great tortures without the aid of God." ⁵⁵

It was precisely the observation that God so strengthened the Christian confessors that they

⁵⁴ *Bassio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, XV, 10 (Migne, P. L., III, 47): "*Quae sic modo doles, quid facies obiecta bestiis, quas contempsisti, cum sacrificare noluisti?*" . . . "*Modo ego patior quod patior, illic autem alius erit in me, qui patietur pro me, quia et ego pro illo passura sum.*" Cfr. Owen, *Some Authentic Acts of the Early Martyrs*, Oxford, 1927, p. 88.

⁵⁵ *Inst. Div.*, I. V, c. 13 (P. L., VI, 592): "*Cum videat vulgus dilacerari homines variis tormentorum generibus et inter fatigatos carnifices invictam tenere patientiam, existimant, id quod res est, nec consensum tam multorum nec perseverantiam sine Deo cruciatus tantos posse superare.*"

remained loyal to their religion in all their sufferings, which attracted many pagans to the Christian faith. Justly, therefore, could Tertullian say to the pagan governors: "Torment us as much as you wish; your iniquity is the proof of our innocence. . . . Nor will it do any good to enhance your cruelty. The more of us you slay, the more numerous we grow: for the blood of Christians is a seed."⁵⁶

That the miraculous fortitude of the martyrs redounded to the advantage of Christianity and contributed much to its preservation and expansion, needs no further proof. It was the supernatural assistance of God that enabled so many confessors to die for their religious convictions and at the same time confirmed thousands of their brethren in the faith and won over innumerable pagans.

Consequently, it is not too much to say that God Himself was the chief factor in extending and solidifying Christianity by giving the martyrs supernatural courage and strength to profess their religion under the most difficult conditions, and, as a further consequence, the Chris-

⁵⁶ *Apolog.*, 50 (P.L., I, 534 sq.): "*Cruciate, torquete, dammate, atterite nos: probatio est enim innocentiae nostrae iniquitas vestra. . . . Nec quidquam tamen proficit exquisitior quaeque crudelitas vestra. . . . Plures efficimur, quoties metimur a vobis: semen est sanguis christianorum.*"

tian religion, in whose favor He wrought these miracles, must be regarded as His own work.

*C. Attempted Natural Explanation of the
Fortitude of the Martyrs*

The Rationalists account for the fortitude of the Christian martyrs by purely natural means. They point to the enthusiasm and zeal of the first Christians—which they describe as bordering on fanaticism—and remind us of kindred phenomena in the natural sphere, such as the bravery of soldiers in battle, the fortitude of criminals condemned to death, and the heroic courage shown by the followers of other religions under similar conditions. They emphasize the motives of honor, human respect, and hope of eternal reward, which are admittedly very powerful in inspiring men with courage. A closer inspection, however, will show that these causes are not sufficient to explain the effects with which they are credited.

I. The Enthusiasm of the First Christians and
the Phenomena Resembling the Heroism of
the Martyrs

As regards the enthusiasm of the first Christians, we have already observed in a general way

that in the ordinary course of human events enthusiasm and zeal neither assume such dimensions nor endure as long as was the case in the early days of the Christian Church, nor do they explain the calmness with which the martyrs went to their death. Between the courage of soldiers in battle and the fortitude of the martyrs there is an essential difference. The circumstances that accompany the courage of the warrior and the motives of his conduct differ *toto caelo* from the circumstances by which the martyrs were surrounded and the motives which inspired them. The soldier on the battlefield is in a state of great excitement. Fighting for his life, he abandons himself unreservedly to the instinct of self-preservation, the strongest of all human motives. Egged on by the strains of martial music, carried away by the gallantry of his fellow-soldiers, mindful of his beloved country, the friends who are falling by his side, the glory which comes to the brave and the disgrace that attaches itself to the coward, the soldier rushes forward courageously, thinking only of victory and not of death. "Patriotism, the desire for glory, and ambition, stimulated by the hope of reward, develop and simultaneously exert their influence upon a mind excited by the extraordinary circumstances and the threatening

danger, while the body finds itself in a most favorable position, enabling it to keep the passions aglow and in constant action by the movement and heat of the combat.”⁵⁷ How different is the position and attitude of the martyr who is about to meet death for his faith! Instead of rushing to kill or to be killed, he awaits death calmly; instead of meeting force with force, he submits patiently to suffering. The passions are silent. The martyr’s body is usually weakened by previous maltreatment, his spirit looks forward to torture and certain death. There is nothing to inflame his courage or give him comfort. Whatever he sees and hears tends to depress and paralyze him. Mockery and contempt accompany him on his final walk, and he feels that not even his name will be handed down to posterity. There are none of the natural incentives and circumstances which are so many fountains of strength and consolation to the soldier. Therefore, it is foolish to compare the fortitude of the Christian martyrs with the courage of soldiers in battle.

To find a more fitting parallel, modern critics have compared the calm resignation of the martyrs with the patient perseverance of present-day soldiers in the trenches. But there are two factors

⁵⁷ J. Balmes, *Cartas á un Escéptico*, Barcelona, 1845, p. 115.

which make this comparison appear inept. First of all, the soldiers under fire in the trenches are compelled to remain in their disagreeable position, whereas the martyrs could have escaped torture by a single word or sign indicating their willingness to deny the faith. Secondly, the soldiers are tormented only by the constant fear of death and mutilation, whereas the martyrs actually suffered cruel physical tortures in addition to their mental anguish.

Equally inept is the comparison of the martyrs with criminals condemned to death. Some of the latter, it is true, resemble the former in that they face the gallows with equanimity. But there is a vast difference between the two cases. The criminal condemned to hang can no longer escape death, whereas the martyrs could easily have obtained their freedom.

Scarcely more convincing are the references to the heroic fortitude of certain pagan heroes, such as the two Decii, Regulus, Mutius Scaevola, and Socrates. Here, too, the phenomena are utterly dissimilar. The cases mentioned are rare exceptions to a general rule, while the Christian Church can point to an immense number of martyrs who laid down their life for the faith. The pagan heroes in question were strong men, inured to warfare and almost without ex-

ception highly educated, who took a keen interest in all public questions and whose courage and energy were inflamed by some danger which threatened them or their native land. Among the heroes of the Christian faith, on the contrary, "we behold old men, women, children, members of the lowest social strata, who had never occupied a prominent position and therefore could not acquire that noble pride, which, being one of the strongest passions of the heart, sometimes endows men with a strength of which they would not otherwise be capable."⁵⁸

It is asserted that some of the adherents of other religions died as courageously for their faith as the martyrs of the first Christian centuries died for theirs. But the number of these heroic confessors is extremely small in comparison with that of the Christian martyrs, and the fact adduced only proves that in certain individual cases human energy alone is sufficient to enable one to endure great suffering with fortitude.

The case is somewhat different with the Hindu widows who voluntarily seek death by fire after the demise of their consorts. This phenomenon (suttee) is part and parcel of an an-

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*

cient custom, which exerts a moral compulsion upon all members of the tribe or nation. These unfortunate women are goaded on by a desire for honor and the good name of the family and by fear of the disgrace which they would incur if they refused to follow their husbands in death. The contrast between their conduct and that of the Christian martyrs is obvious. The martyrs were not impelled by custom or by a desire for glory or by fear of disgrace; on the contrary, all these motives urged them to deny the faith.⁵⁹

2. The Motive of Glory and the Hope of Eternal Reward

After what we have said, it is hardly necessary to refute the assertion that the martyrs were impelled by ambition and a desire for glory. We will only call attention to a few points which must not be overlooked in this connection. The first is that the contention with which we are dealing plainly contradicts the humility of the martyrs and their trust in Divine Providence. The second is that the Christians, so long as they adhered to their religion, were regarded as fools or fanatics, or at best as victims of deception, and

⁵⁹ Ign. Ottiger, S.J., *Theol. Fundamentalis*, Vol. I, pp. 890 sq.

treated either with hatred and contempt or with pity; in either case there was small chance of their gaining any honor or glory. The third point to which we would call attention is that it cannot be explained how the many thousands of martyrs of the lower classes should have regarded honor and glory as more important than life itself.

But did not the hope of eternal reward in the life beyond inspire the Christian martyrs with fortitude? We admit that this is true. In fact, it is precisely our contention. Only it was not the merely natural hope of happiness in the life beyond, nor a natural fear of eternal punishment that gave them strength to sacrifice their earthly possessions and their life and to suffer the most excruciating torments. For human nature, as we all know, is so constituted that considerations of the future, good or bad, are not able to inspire heroic deeds or to help men bear extraordinary sufferings. Man is most forcibly impressed and most easily moved to action by the things which immediately affect his senses. Belief in a future reward or punishment may be deeply rooted in the soul without influencing one's conduct, which is but too often determined by objects that directly attract or repel the mind. If the

conduct of the many thousands of Christian martyrs is quite different from that of the average man, and they acted solely with a view to the future, this is a sure proof that they were inspired and assisted by God.

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3. THE BENEFITS CONFERRED UPON MANKIND BY CHRISTIANITY IN THE SOCIAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS SPHERES

The question here at issue is the influence exercised by the Christian religion upon the customs and habits of men, not the teaching of that religion in itself, which has already been offered as an independent argument. We deal only with the first three centuries of the Christian era, in order to restrict the scope of demonstration within convenient limits. Here again we have to demonstrate: (1) That Christianity exerted an extraordinarily favorable influence on the customs of nations and (2) that this influence was owing to its supernatural character. From the latter proposition it will then follow that, since God cannot favor a false religion by lending it His support, Christianity must be of divine origin.

We assert that the extraordinarily beneficent influence of Christianity upon the social, moral, and religious life of men is a proof of its divine origin.

The elevating effects of Christianity on the social, moral, and religious life of men during the first three centuries of the Christian era were so extraordinary that natural causes alone would

not have been sufficient to produce them. They can be explained only by the action of a supernatural, divine power. Now, if God has positively favored and recommended the religion which was attributed to divine revelation by its founder, Jesus Christ, that religion must be of divine origin. Therefore, Christianity is of divine origin.

A. The Extraordinary Influence of Christianity upon the Social, Moral, and Religious Life of Men

1. The effects of Christianity on the moral and religious life are attested, for the converts from Judaism by Acts II, 42-47 and IV, 32-35; for the converts from heathenism by numerous Christian as well as pagan authorities.

a) *Christian Testimonies.*—*St. Clement of Rome* writes to the Corinthians: "For who has stayed with you without making proof of the virtue and steadfastness of your faith? Who has not admired the sobriety and Christian gentleness of your piety? Who has not reported your character so magnificent in its hospitality? And who has not blessed your perfect and secure knowledge?"⁶⁰

⁶⁰ *Ep. ad Cor.*, I, 2 (K. Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, I, 9 sq.)

Aristides, in his *Apology*, which is believed to have been addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161), describes the life of the early Christians as follows: "These are they who beyond all nations of the earth have found the truth; for they know God as Creator and Maker of all things, and they worship no other God beside Him; for they have His commandments graven on their hearts, and these they keep in expectation of the world to come. . . . (They do not commit adultery, nor fornication, nor do they bear false witness; they do not deny a deposit nor covet what is not theirs . . .) Whatsoever they would not should be done unto them, they do not to another. . . . (they do good to their enemies: and their wives, O King, are pure as virgins, and their daughters modest. . . . and they walk in all humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them, and they love one another . . .) He that hath, supplieth him that hath not without grudging: if they see a stranger, they bring him under their roof and rejoice over him as over a brother indeed, for they call not one another brethren after the flesh, but after the spirit. They are ready for Christ's sake to give up their own lives; for His commandments they securely keep, living holily and

righteously according as the Lord their God hath commanded them, giving thanks to Him at all hours over their food and drink and the rest of their good things. . . . (But the good deeds they do, they do not proclaim in the ears of the multitude, and they take care that no one shall perceive them, . . . but their sayings and their ordinances, O King, and the glory of their service and the expectation of their recompense of reward . . . which they expect in another world, thou art able to know from their writings.) . . . Truly great and wonderful is their teaching to him that is willing to examine and understand it. And truly this is a new race, and there is something divine mingled with it. Take now their writings and read in them, and lo! you will find that not of myself have I brought these things forward, nor as their advocate have I said them, but as I have read in their writings these things, I firmly believe and those things that are to come. . . . And truly blessed is the race of the Christians more than all men that are upon the face of the earth. Let the tongue of those now be silenced who talk vanity and who oppress the Christians, and let them now speak the truth. . . . Let all those . . . who do not know God . . . anticipate the dread judgment

which is to come by Jesus, the Messias, upon the whole race of men." ⁶¹

⁶¹ *Apolog.*, c. 15 and *circa finem*. Cfr. O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, Vol. I, 2nd ed., Freiburg, 1913, p. 197. Aristides, was a philosopher of Athens, who is mentioned by Eusebius (*H. E.*, IV, 3) as a contemporary of Quadratus, who in turn lived so near to the lifetime of Christ that he declares some who had been healed by the Saviour "lived on to our own times." His *Apology*, long lost, was recovered by J. Rendel Harris in 1889, in a Syriac translation, in one of the libraries of the Convent of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. All that had been known of this work previously was an Armenian fragment published in 1878. (See *The Newly Recovered Apology of Aristides*, by Helen B. Harris, pp. 8-25). Harris and Harnack believe this *Apology* to have been presented to the Emperor Antoninus Pius; but Dr. Armitage Robinson accepts the claim made in the *Apology* itself, that it was addressed to the Emperor Hadrian (117-138). If the latter claim be correct, then "this earliest extant argument for Christianity came into existence within a short generation of the Apostolic age, and its author must have been a boy when the Apostle John died." (C. M. Cobern, *The New Archeological Discoveries and their Bearing upon the New Testament*, New York, 1917, p. 246). For the full Syriac text and translation of the above bracketed portion see J. Rendel Harris, *Texts and Studies*, Vol. I, pp. 1-64; for a corrected text (represented in the unbracketed portion) see J. A. Robinson, "Apology of Aristides," in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. There is a marked similarity between some portions of the *Apology* of Aristides and the anonymous *Epistle to Diognetus* (second or third century), which has been known since the sixteenth century. (Cfr. Cobern, *op. cit.*, p. 251). *Other Editions*: Greek text and study by R. Seeberg, in Th. Zahn, *Forschungen zur Gesch. des ntl. Kanons* Vol. V (Erlangen and Leipzig, 1893), pp. 159-414. Text and study by E. Hennecke in *Texte u. Untersuchungen*, IV, 3, Leipzig, 1893. *Transl.* from Syriac by R. Raabe in *T. u. U.*, IX, I. Text, transl., and notes in J. Geffken, *Zwei Griechische Apologeten* (Leipzig and Berlin 1907) pp. 1-96. German transl. in *Bibl. d. Kirchenväter*, Vol. XII, pp. 1-54, Kempten, 1913.

Justin Martyr says: "We who formerly delighted in fornication, now embrace chastity alone; we who formerly used magical arts, dedicate ourselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock and communicate to every one in need; we who hated and destroyed one another, and on account of their different manners would not live with men of a different tribe, now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them, and pray for our enemies, and endeavor to persuade those who hate us unjustly to live in conformity with the splendid precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God, the ruler of all." ⁶²

Athenagoras writes: "Among us you will find uneducated persons, artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth: they do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike back; when robbed, they do not go to law; they

⁶² *Apolog.*, I, 14 (*P. G.*, VI, 348); *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. II, Edinburgh, 1867, p. 17; ed. by L. Pautigny in *Textes et Documents*, Vol. I, Paris, 1904.

give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbors as themselves." ⁶³

Tertullian says: "We meet together as an assembly and congregation, that, offering up prayer to God, as with united force, we may wrestle with Him in our supplications. . . . We pray, too, for the emperors, for their ministers, and for all in authority, for the welfare of the world, for the prevalence of peace, for the delay of the final consummation. . . . [We dispense gifts] to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such, too, as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their fellow-Christians. But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another."

And the same writer says in another place "We call your own acts to witness, you who are

⁶³ *Legat. pro Christ.*, II (P.L., VI, 912 sq.); *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. II, Edinburgh, 1867, p. 387. E. Schwartz *Athenagorae Libellus pro Christianis; Oratio de Resurrectione Cadaverum*, in *T. u. U.*, IV, 2, Leipsic, 1891; J. Geffken, *Zweite Christliche Apologeten*, pp. 115-238.

daily presiding at the trials of prisoners and passing sentence upon crimes. Well, in your long lists of those accused of many and various atrocities, has any assassin, any cutpurse, any man guilty of sacrilege or seduction or stealing bathers' clothes, his name entered as being a Christian too? Or when Christians are brought before you on the mere ground of their name, is there ever found among them an ill-doer of the sort just mentioned? It is always with *your* folk that the prison is steaming, the mines are sighing, the wild beasts are fed: it is from *you* the exhibitors of gladiatorial shows always get their herds of criminals for the occasion. You find no Christian there, except simply as being such; or if one is there as something else, a Christian he is no longer." ⁶⁴

⁶⁴ *Apolog.*, 39, 44 (P. L., I, 468 sqq., 496 sq.): "*Coimus in coetum et congregationem, ut ad Deum, quasi manu facta, precationibus ambiamus. . . . Oramus etiam pro imperatoribus, pro ministeriis eorum ac potestatibus, pro statu saeculi, pro rerum quiete, pro mora finis . . . egenis [dispensatur] alendis humandisque, et pueris ac puellis re ac parentibus destitutis, iamque domesticis senibus, itemque naufragis, et si in metallis, et si qui in insulis, vel in custodiis, duntaxat ex causa Dei sectae alumni confessionis suae fiunt. Sed eiusmodi vel maxime dilectionis operatio notam nobis inurit penes quosdam. Vide, inquit, ut invicem se diligant. . . . Vestros iam contestamur actus, qui quotidie iudicandis custodiis praesidetis, qui sententiis elogia dispungitis. Tot a vobis nocentes variis criminum elogiis recensentur; quis ille sicarius, quis manualis, quis sacrilegus aut corruptor aut lavantium praedo, idem etiam christianus adscribitur? Aut cum christiani suo titulo*

Lactantius writes: "That, therefore, which they perceived to be justly required by the demands of nature, but which they were themselves unable to perform, and saw that the philosophers could not effect, is accomplished only by divine instruction; for that only is wisdom. Were *they* able to persuade anyone, who do not even persuade themselves of anything? Or will *they* crush the desires, moderate the anger, and restrain the lusts of anyone, when they themselves both yield to vices and acknowledge that they are overpowered by nature? But what influence is exerted on the souls of men by the precepts of God, because of their simplicity and truth, is shown by daily proofs. Give me a man who is passionate, scurrilous, and unrestrained; with a very few words of God 'I will render him as gentle as a sheep.' Give me one who is grasping, covetous, and tenacious; I will presently restore him to you liberal, and freely bestowing his money with full hands. Give me a man who is afraid of pain and death; he shall presently despise crosses, and fires, and the bull [a brazen

offerentur, quis ex illis etiam talis, quales tot nocentes? De vestris semper aestuat carcer, de vestris semper metalla suspirant, de vestris semper bestiae saginantur, de vestris semper munerarii noxiorum greges pascunt. Nemo illic christianus, nisi hoc tantum, aut si et aliud, iam non christianus." (Tr. from the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. XI, pp. 118 sq., 126 sq.)

bull invented by Perillus, which the tyrant Phalaris used as an instrument of torture; it was so constructed that the groans of the victims appeared to resemble the bellowing of the bull]. Give me one who is lustful, an adulterer, a glutton; you shall presently see him sober, chaste, and temperate. Give me one who is cruel and bloodthirsty; that fury shall presently be changed into true clemency. Give me a man who is unjust, foolish, an evil-doer; forthwith he shall be just, and wise, and innocent; for by one laver [*i. e.*, Baptism] all his wickedness shall be taken away. So great is the power of divine wisdom that, when infused into the breast of man, by one impulse, it once for all expels folly, which is the mother of faults.”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ *Instit. Div.*, l. III, 26 (P.L., VI, 431 sq.): “*Quod ergo illi [philosophi ethnici] poscente natura faciendum esse senserunt, sed tamen neque ipsi facere potuerunt neque a philosophis fieri posse viderunt, sola haec efficit doctrina caelestis, quia sola sapientia est. Illi scilicet persuadere cuicumque potuerunt, qui nihil persuadent etiam sibi? aut cuiusquam cupiditates oppriment, iram temperabunt, libidinem coercebunt, cum ipsi et cedant vitiis, et fateantur, plus valere naturam? Dei autem praecepta, quia et simplicia et vera sunt, quantum valeant in animis hominum, quotidiana experimenta demonstrant. Da mihi virum, qui sit iracundus, maledicus, effraenatus: paucissimis Dei verbis ‘tam placidum, quam ovem, reddam.’ (Terence, *Adelphi*, IV, 1). Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem: iam tibi eum liberalem dabo, et pecuniam suam plenius manibus largientem. Da timidum doloris et mortis: iam cruces et ignes et taurum contemnet. Da libidinosum, adulterum, ganeonem: iam sobrium, castum, continentem videbis. Da crudelem et san-*

Origen calls attention to the difference in the conduct of the Christians before and after their conversion. "Note well," he writes, "to what dissipations, injustices, passions they [the Christians] were given over before [*i. e.*, before they embraced the religion of Jesus Christ]" and "how honest, serious, and well-behaved they are since they have become acquainted with that [*scil.* the Christian] doctrine, and how many of them have even refrained from legitimate sexual intercourse out of love of extraordinary purity and also in order to serve God with a cleaner heart."⁶⁶ And in another passage: "The churches of God, which are instructed by Christ, when carefully contrasted with the assemblies of the districts in which they are situated, are as beacons (*φωστῆρες*) in the world; for who would not admit that even the inferior members of the church, and those who, in comparison with the better, are less worthy,

guinis appetentem: iam in veram clementiam furor ille mutabitur. Da iniustum, insipientem, peccatorem: continuo et aequus et prudens et innocens erit. Uno enim lavacro malitia omnis abolebitur. Tanta divinae sapientiae vis est, ut in hominis pectus infusa, matrem delictorum stultitiam uno semel impetu expellat." (Tr. by Wm. Fletcher, *The Works of Lactantius*, Vol. I, Edinburgh, 1871, pp. 200 sq.)

⁶⁶ *Contra Celsum*, I, 26 (P. G., XI, 712).

are nevertheless more excellent than many of those who belong to the assemblies in the different districts?"⁶⁷

Eusebius pronounces a similar judgment. "The Persians," he says, "since they have accepted his [Christ's] teaching, no longer marry their mothers, and the Scythians no longer nourish themselves with the flesh of human beings since the doctrine of Christ has penetrated to them. Other rude and uncultured nations no more commit incest with daughters and sisters; the men are no longer inflamed with furious lust towards one another and no longer seek amusements which run counter to the law of nature."⁶⁸

b) *Pagan Testimonies*.—*Pliny* reported to the Emperor Trajan: "They [the Christians] declared, however, that this had been the sum-total of their delusion, that they had been wont to come together on a fixed day before dawn and sing a hymn alternately to Christ as a god, and to bind themselves by a solemn obligation, not for any guilty purpose, but not to commit theft or robbery or adultery, nor to break faith or

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.*, III, 29 (*P. G.*, XI, 957). *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. XXII, p. 111, Edinburgh, 1872.

⁶⁸ *Praep. Evang.*, I, 4 (*P. G.*, XXI, 40).

repudiate a deposit when called upon to pay it." ⁶⁹

Julian the Apostate, in a letter to the priest Arsakios of Galatia, advised the pagans to model their lives upon those of the Christians. He writes: "We pay no attention to the manner in which godlessness [Christianity] mostly spread by hospitality toward strangers, by tender solicitude for the burial of the dead, and by pretended holiness of life. All these things must in truth be practiced by us. . . . It is disgraceful if none among the Jews beg, but the godless Galileans, besides their poor also support ours, who seem to lack our aid." ⁷⁰

Galen, a pagan philosopher and physician, who died about the year 200 A. D., makes mention of the Christians in his book on the Doctrines of Plato's Republic as follows: "The majority of men have not the mental capacity to follow the proof of any proposition conveyed in a consecutive discourse. Consequently, they require to be taught by parables, as we see in our own times that those men who are called Christians have drawn their beliefs from parables. These men, however, sometimes act like true

⁶⁹ *Epp.*, l. X, 96 (ed. Müller, Leipsic, 1903, p. 291 sq.). See the full passage *supra*, p. 251.

⁷⁰ Cfr. Sozomen, *H. E.*, V, 16 (Migne, *P. G.*, LXVII, 1261 sq.)

philosophers. For we have ocular demonstration of the fact that they despise death; also that, in obedience to a sort of modesty, they abstain from sexual pleasures. For there are among them women and men who throughout life have refrained from marital intercourse. Some, too, there are who have progressed so far in self-control, based on their earnest pursuit of righteousness, as to be not one whit inferior to true philosophers." ⁷¹

Its most enduring influence Christianity exerted upon the family life. The family had sadly degenerated almost everywhere when the Christian religion began to spread in Rome and Greece. The wife was little more than a slave, completely subject to the whims of her husband. The slightest pretext was sufficient to bring about divorce and wife abandonment. Weakly or

⁷¹ "*Hominum plerique orationem demonstrativam continuam mente assequi nequeunt; quare indigent, ut instituantur parabolis, veluti nostro tempore videmus homines illos, qui christiani vocantur, fidem suam a parabolis petiisse. Hi tamen interdum talia faciunt, qualia qui vere philosophantur. Nam quod mortem contemnant, id quidem ante oculos habemus; item quod verecundia ducti ab usu rerum venerearum abhorrent. Sunt enim inter eos et feminae et viri, qui per totam vitam a concubitu abstinuerint; sunt etiam qui in animis regendis coercendisque et in acerrimo studio eo progressi sint, ut nihil cedant vere philosophantibus.*" (*De Sententiis Politiae Platonicae*; the passage is preserved in the fragments of the Arab historian Abulfeda [+ 1331]. The Latin translation is by Fleischer, Leipsic, 1831, p. 109.)

crippled children were often slain at birth, as they could not be expected to become useful soldiers or citizens. The slaves were treated as chattels, of which the master could dispose according to his good pleasure.

With regard to all these customs Christianity wrought a complete change. It emphasized the unity and indissolubility of marriage. It proclaimed the equality of all human beings before God and thus made the wife the equal of her husband. For the same reason it championed the rights of slaves and children.⁷²

B. The Supernatural Causes of These Effects

The effects produced by the religion of Jesus Christ upon the social, moral, and religious life of mankind during the first three centuries of the Christian era constitute a unique phenomenon in the history of the human race. There are no others that could be compared with it in extent, depth or duration. Never and at no time have human power and wisdom produced anything that could even distantly equal the marvelous effects of Christianity. It is evident that what human agencies could not effect, in

⁷² Cfr. Döllinger-Darnell, *The Gentile and the Jew in the Courts of the Temple of Christ*, Vol. II, 2nd ed., pp. 229 sqq.

spite of all exertions and with the use of all means at their command, must be regarded as morally impossible for them. If this is the case, then the power and wisdom of God must have wrought the effects here under consideration, and the Christian religion is truly His work.

VII. The Messianic Prophecies of the Old Testament

1. In the preceding section of this treatise we have demonstrated the divine origin of Christianity from the character of its teaching and the circumstances accompanying its spread. The arguments we have given are strengthened by the fact that Christ and His work formed the object of certain remarkable prophecies which were recorded centuries before the establishment of the Christian religion, and were fulfilled in Him and the Church which He established. These prophecies, which are preserved in the books of the Old Testament, are called Messianic because they refer to the Messiah and his mission.⁷³

⁷³ "Messias" from a Hebrew word meaning "the anointed," occurs thirty-five times in the Old Testament, mostly as a royal title. In three places (Ps. II, 2; Dan. IX, 25 and 26) the term refers to the promised Redeemer. These texts, especially Ps. II, 2, form the foundation of the New Testament usage, in which

2. In order to be able to employ the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament as an argument for the divine origin of the New Testament, we have to demonstrate: (1) that these prophecies refer to the promised Messiah and his kingdom, (2) that they were fulfilled, and (3) that they were of divine provenience. If they were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, then the religion established by Him (Christianity) is divine, since these prophecies represent the Messiah as a Divine Person and His work as the work of God.

3. The nature of our argument does not require that it be based upon *all* the Messianic prophecies, and, hence, we shall limit ourselves to a few which are distinguished for clarity and definiteness, refer in their literal sense to the Messiah, and are of essential importance for His characterization.

4. Our first task, therefore, will be to combine the features of the Messianic image as painted by the different prophets, *i. e.*, to study the vocation and activity of the Messiah, His divine dignity and human descent, the time and

χριστός, *Christus*, is the usual name of the Saviour. (The term *Messias* occurs only twice in the New Testament: John I, 41 and IV, 25.) Cfr. Ph. Friedrich, *Der Christusname*, Cologne, 1905, pp. 29 sqq.

place of His birth, His Passion and death. We shall find that all the qualities of the promised Messias are embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and in no one else. Consequently Jesus Christ is the Messias announced by the Old Testament prophets, and the religion which He founded is based upon divine revelation.

1. THE MESSIAS IN THE PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. Vocation and Activity of the Messias

a) *The Vocation of the Messias.*—a) *His Royal Office and Kingdom.*—The Messias, according to the prophets, was to rule as a king. "I am appointed king by him over Sion, his holy mountain." ⁷⁴

His kingdom will embrace all nations and extend to the ends of the earth. "I will give thee the gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." ⁷⁵ And "he shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth; . . . all kings of the

⁷⁴ Ps. II, 6: "*Ego autem constitutus sum rex ab eo super Sion montem sanctum eius.*"

⁷⁵ Ps. II, 8: "*Postula a me, et dabo tibi gentes haereditatem tuam et possessionem tuam terminos terrae.*"

earth shall adore him: all nations shall serve him." ⁷⁶

The Messianic Kingdom will last forever: "He shall continue with the sun, and before the moon, throughout all generations, . . . till the moon be taken away." ⁷⁷

His will be a reign of justice and peace: "He shall judge the poor of the people, and he shall save the children of the poor: and he shall humble the oppressor. . . . In his days shall justice spring up and abundance of peace." ⁷⁸

That Ps. II and LXXI do not refer to purely mundane conditions, but to the Messiah and His supernatural kingdom, is evident from the enormous size and the eternal duration of that kingdom. An earthly kingdom of such dimensions as to embrace all the nations of the earth, and of such solidity as to endure as long as the earth itself, is a moral impossibility. The description given in these two Psalms must apply to a kingdom independent of earthly conditions like the one attributed by Ps. II, 2 to the Messiah.

⁷⁶ Ps. LXXI, 8, 11: "*Dominabitur a mari usque ad mare et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrarum; . . . adorabunt eum omnes reges terrae, omnes gentes servient ei.*"

⁷⁷ Ps. LXXI, 5, 7: "*Permanebit cum sole et ante lunam, in generatione et generationem . . . donec auferatur luna.*"

⁷⁸ Ps. LXXI, 4, 7: "*Iudicabit pauperes populi et salvos faciet filios pauperum et humiliabit calumniatorem. . . . Orietur in diebus eius iustitia et abundantia pacis.*"

β) *The Prophetical Office of the Messias.*—

The Messias is described as a teacher sent by God, as a lawgiver, and as the founder of a new, universal, and perpetual covenant.

The Messias will be a prophet: "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren like unto me [Moses]: him thou shalt hear." ⁷⁹

He is sent by God as a teacher, lawgiver, and the founder of a new, universal and perpetual covenant: "Behold my servant . . . I have given my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles. . . . He shall bring forth judgment unto truth, . . . and the islands shall wait for his law. . . . And I have given thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles, that thou mightest open the eyes of the blind, and bring forth the prisoner out of prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." ⁸⁰

"It is a small thing that thou shouldst be my

⁷⁹ Deut. XVIII, 15: "*Prophetam de gente tua et de fratribus tuis, sicut me [sc. Moysen], suscitabit tibi Dominus Deus tuus: ipsum audies.*"

⁸⁰ Is. XLII, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7: "*Ecce, servus meus . . . dedi spiritum meum super eum, iudicium gentibus proferet. . . . In veritate educet iudicium . . . Et legem eius insulae expectabunt . . . Et dedi te in foedus populi, in lucem gentium, ut aperires oculos caecorum et educeres de conclusione vinctum, de domo carceris sedentes in tenebris.*"

servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to convert the dregs of Israel. Behold, I have given thee to be the light of the gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation even to the farthest parts of the earth.”⁸¹

“I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the faithful mercies of David. Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, for a leader and a master to the gentiles.”⁸²

“The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me: he hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up.”⁸³

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared in the top of mountains, and high above the hills: and people shall flow to it. And many nations shall come in haste, and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to

⁸¹ Is. XLIX, 6: “*Parum est, ut sis mihi servus ad suscitandas tribus Jacob et faeces Israel convertendas. Ecce dedi te in lucem gentium, ut sis salus mea usque ad extremum terrae.*”

⁸² Is. LV, 3 sq.: “*Feriam vobiscum pactum sempiternum, misericordias David fideles. Ecce testem populis dedi eum, ducem ac praeceptorem gentibus.*”

⁸³ Is. LXI, 1: “*Spiritus Domini super me, eo quod unxerit Dominus me. Ad annuntiandum mansuetis misit me, ut mederer contritis corde et praedicarem captivis indulgentiam et clausis apertionem.*”

the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth out of Sion, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem.”⁸⁴

“Behold the days shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Juda: not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. . . . But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord: I will give my law in their bowels, and I will write it in their heart: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”⁸⁵

The prediction of Moses, regarding future prophets like himself, must not, as the context

⁸⁴ Mich. IV, 1 sq.: “*Et erit, in novissimo dierum erit mons domus Domini praeeparatus in vertice montium et sublimis super colles et fluent ad eum populi. Et properabunt gentes multae et dicent: venite, ascendamus ad montem Domini et ad domum Dei Iacob et docebit nos de viis suis et ibimus in semitis eius, quia de Sion egredietur lex et verbum Domini de Ierusalem.*” (Cfr. Is. II, 2 sq.)

⁸⁵ Jer. XXXI, 31 sqq.: “*Ecce dies venient, dicit Dominus, et feriam domui Israel et domui Iuda foedus novum, non secundum pactum quod pepigi cum patribus eorum in die, qua apprehendi manum eorum, ut educerem eos de terra Aegypti. Sed hoc erit pactum, quod feriam cum domo Israel: post dies illos, dicit Dominus, dabo legem meam in visceribus eorum, et in corde eorum scribam eam, et ero eis in Deum et ipsi erunt mihi in populum.*”

shows, be restricted to any particular person, but refers to the prophets as a class, including the Messias. In matter of fact the expectation of the Messias as a prophet sent by God is traceable to the passage from Deuteronomy just quoted, as may be seen from certain unambiguous texts of the New Testament, *e. g.*, John I, 45; V, 45 sqq.; VI, 14; Acts VII, 37. For this reason the prediction of Moses deserves first place among the Old Testament prophecies regarding the prophetical office of the Messias.

The *Ebed Yahweh* (servant of God) repeatedly mentioned by Isaias⁸⁶ is not, as has been asserted, identical with the Chosen People, or with the prophetical office as such, or with some individual prophet of the Old Testament.

The "servant of God" is not identical with the Jewish nation, because it cannot be said of that nation that it shall be set up *in foedus populi*, as a mediator of the covenant made by the Lord with His people. Nor can the Jewish nation be truthfully represented as mild, meek, and pleasing to God, as is *Ebed Yahweh*,⁸⁷ more especially since the prophet on other occasions complains bitterly of the misbehavior of the people.

Nor can the "servant of God" be identical

⁸⁶ Is. XLII, 1-9; XLIX, 1-9; L, 4-11; LII, 13-53.

⁸⁷ Is. XLII, 1-4.

with the prophetical office as such, or with some part of the Jewish nation, since the appellation occurs only in the singular, and its place is never taken by a plural form. The term has absolutely no collective meaning.

Finally, every collective unit and every human individual is excluded by the vocational activity attributed to the "servant of God," who is described as the founder of an eternal covenant, as a teacher and lawgiver for the whole of mankind. Hence the text can only be applied to the Messiah.

The announcement and foundation of law and justice ascribed to the "servant of God" casts a new light upon the kingdom of the Messiah. The enforcement of existing laws and the passage of new laws belong to the most important functions of a ruler. Here these functions are represented as constituting, together with the mediation of the covenant and teaching, the entire occupation of the "servant of God." This trait indicates the predominantly spiritual character of the Messianic Kingdom, which, as a kingdom of justice and peace,⁸⁸ aims at universal dominion without the use of arms and without violating justice and law.

⁸⁸ Ps. LXXI.

Micheas (IV, 1-8) lays the scene of the future Messianic kingdom in Jerusalem.

Jeremias (XXI, 31) emphasizes the spiritual character of the divine law of the New Covenant.

γ) *The Priestly Office of the Messias.*—The Messias will be both a king and a priest: "The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech." ⁸⁹

He will voluntarily offer himself as a sacrifice for the sins of men: "Surely he hath borne our iniquities and carried our sorrows. . . . But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed. . . . The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was his own will. . . . He shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed." ⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Ps. CIX, 4.

⁹⁰ Is. LIII, 4-10: "*Vere languores nostros ipse tulit et dolores nostros ipse portavit. . . . Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras, attritus est propter scelera nostra. Disciplina pacis nostrae super eum et livore eius sanati sumus. . . . Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum. Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit. . . . Si posuerit pro peccato animam suam, videbit semen longævum.*"

This bloody sacrifice shall be followed in the Messianic era by *an unbloody sacrifice*, offered throughout the whole world: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts: and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the gentiles." ⁹¹

Psalm CIX, attributed in the title to David, is Messianic in the strict and proper sense of the word. David, who was himself vested with supreme power, could not have called an earthly king or general his "lord." Nor could the command of Yahweh, "Sit thou at my right hand," etc., have been addressed to an ordinary mortal. We know of no earthly prince upon whom the priesthood was conferred by positive divine command, as it is in verse 4 of this remarkable Psalm. Simon the Machabee, to whom the Rationalists like to apply this Psalm, was indeed a political ruler and high priest, but he had not

⁹¹ Mal. I, 10 sq.: "*Non est mihi voluntas in vobis, dicit Dominus exercituum, et munus non suscipiam de manu vestra. Ab ortu enim solis usque ad occasum magnum est nomen meum in gentibus, et in omni loco sacrificatur et offertur nomini meo oblatio munda, quia magnum est nomen meum in gentibus.*"

received this double dignity by solemn divine institution, but merely by the consent of the people.⁹² Nor could sitting at the right hand of God be attributed to him in any intelligible sense.

Consequently, the only possible interpretation of Psalm CIX is that it prefigures the Messiah, whom we already know as a king, indicating that he is to be at the same time a priest, similar to Melchisedech, and, like him, will offer bread and wine in his dual role of priest and king.⁹³

The Messianic character of Is. LIII, 4-10 has already been shown.

The words of Malachias (I, 10 sq.) also refer to the Messiah. The unbloody sacrifice of which this prophet speaks is to be offered at a time when the one true God will be worshipped throughout the world. This will be the case only after the coming of the Messiah, who is promised as the light of the gentiles.⁹⁴ Jewish sacrifices cannot be meant here, because, according to Malachias,⁹⁵ the Lord refuses to accept sacrifices from the Jews, and for the further reason that the Jews were allowed to offer sacrifices only in the Temple.

⁹² 1 Mach. XIV, 41 sqq.

⁹³ Gen. XIV, 18.

⁹⁴ Ps. LXXI, 8-11; Is. XLII, 1, 4, 6, 7; XLIX, 6.

⁹⁵ Mal. I, 10.

b) *The Career of the Messias.*—a) He will be preceded by a forerunner. "Behold I send my angel, and he shall prepare the way before my face. And presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to his temple. Behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts."⁹⁶

That this text is Messianic, is evident from the predicates attributed in its second half to the coming one, who is called lord and angel (*i. e.*, a messenger), who, because He comes to His Temple, is consubstantial with God. That the Messias is to be both a king and the founder of a new covenant, we have already seen; that He is entitled to divine honors we shall see presently.

The first half of the verse mentions the divine mission of the messenger who is to prepare the way for the "angel of the testament."

β) The Messias will be pleasing to God, mild, meek, modest, and a friend of the poor.

"Behold my servant, I will uphold him: my elect, my soul delighteth in him: I have given my spirit upon him. . . . He shall not cry, nor have respect to person, neither shall his voice be

⁹⁶ Mal. III, 1: "*Ecce, ego mitto angelum meum, et praeeparabit viam ante faciem meam. Et statim veniet ad templum suum dominator, quem vos quaeritis, et angelus testame-ti, quem vos vultis. Ecce venit, dicit Dominus exercituum.*"

heard abroad. The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench. . . . He shall not be sad, nor troublesome." ⁹⁷

"He shall deliver the poor from the mighty: and the needy that had no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy: and he shall save the souls of the poor. He shall redeem their souls from usuries and iniquity: and their names shall be honorable in his sight." ⁹⁸

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king will come to thee, the just and saviour: he is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." ⁹⁹

Is. XLII, 1-4 and Ps. LXXI have already been shown to be Messianic on a previous page.

Zach. IX, 9 refers to the Messiah because the prophet speaks here of a just king, who comes as

⁹⁷ Is. XLII, 1-4: "*Ecce servus meus, suscipiam eum; electus meus, complacuit sibi in illo anima mea, dedi spiritum meum super eum. . . . Non clamabit, neque accipiet personam, nec audietur vox eius foris. Calamum quassatum non conteret et linum fumigans non extinguet . . . Non erit tristis neque turbulentus.*"

⁹⁸ Ps. LXXI, 12-14: "*Liberabit pauperem a potente, et pauperem cui non erat adiutor. Parcet pauperi et inopi, et animas pauperum salvas faciet. Ex usuris et iniquitate redimet animas eorum et honorabile nomen eorum coram illo.*"

⁹⁹ Zach. IX, 9: "*Exulta satis, filia Sion, iubila, filia Jerusalem ecce, rex tuus veniet tibi iustus et salvator [Hebr. salvatus, i. e. victorious], ipse pauper et ascendens super asinam et super pullum filium asinae.*"

saviour to found a kingdom of peace among the gentiles, and whose dominion will extend "to the end of the earth." ¹

7) The Messiah will work miracles and teach mainly in Galilee. "Say to the fainthearted: Take courage, and fear not: behold your God will bring the revenge of recompense: God himself will come and will save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free." ²

"At the first time the land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthali was despised: and at the last the way of the sea beyond the Jordan of the Galilee of the gentiles was heaped with honors. The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen." ³

¹ Zach. IX, 9 sq.

² Is. XXXV, 4-6: "*Dicite pusillanimis: confortamini et nolite timere, ecce Deus vester ultionem adducet retributionis, Deus ipse veniet et salvabit vos. Tunc aperientur oculi caecorum et aures surdorum patebunt. Tunc saliet sicut cervus claudus et aperta erit lingua mutorum.*"

³ Is. IX, 1 sq.: "*Primo tempore alleviata est terra Zabulon et terra Nephthali, et novissimo aggravata est via maris trans Iordanem Galilaeae gentium. Populus, qui ambulabat in tenebris, vidit lucem magnam, habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis, lux orta est eis.*" (Our translation above follows the Hebrew text.)

The description given in the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaias (verses 4–6) refers to the Messianic era, because divine help is immediately held out, and for the further reason that the words of the prophet cannot possibly be taken in a purely figurative sense as a description of the happiness of Israel after the exile.

In Is. IX, 1 sq., quoted two paragraphs above, the prophet can have reference only to the coming of the Messias, since the Messias was to be “a light for the gentiles,”⁴ and the rising of the light⁵ is traced to the birth of a child, who is called “Prince of Peace,” “God the mighty,” and “Father of the world to come.”⁶

B. The Divine Dignity and Human Descent of the Messias

1) The Messias is to be *God and man* at one and the same time: “For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace.”⁷

⁴ Is. XLII, 6.

⁵ Is. XLII, 2.

⁶ Is. XLII, 6.

⁷ Is. IX, 6: “*Parvulus enim natus est nobis et filius datus est*

"Out of thee [Bethlehem] shall come forth unto me he that is to be the ruler in Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity."⁸

"And presently the Lord shall come to his temple."⁹

The Messianic character of Is. IX, 6 appears from the fact that the child that is to be born shall have an empire of peace, and that his birth will coincide with the rising of a light among the gentiles.¹⁰

Divinity is expressly attributed to the Messias-Child, as the prophet calls Him "God the Mighty" and "Father of the world to come."¹¹

The same Child is hailed by Micheas as "the ruler in Israel," whose "going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity."¹²

Mal. III, 1, a text which has been shown above to be Messianic, indirectly asserts the di-

nobis, et factus est principatus super humerum eius, et vocabitur nomen eius: admirabilis, consiliarius, Deus fortis, pater futuri saeculi, princeps pacis."

⁸ Mich. V, 2: "*Ex te [sc. Bethlehem] mihi egredietur, qui sit dominator in Israel, et egressus eius ab initio, a diebus aeternitatis."*

⁹ Mal. III, 1: "*Et statim veniet ad templum suum dominator."*

¹⁰ Is. IX, 6 sq., 1 sq.

¹¹ Is. IX, 6.

¹² Mich. V, 2.

vinity of the Messias by calling the temple or house of God His property.

2. The *human descent* of the Messias follows from these facts: (a) that He was to be born of a woman, (b) that He was to be a descendant of Abraham and hence a scion of the Israelitic nation, and (c) that He was to be a son of David.

a) The Messias is to be born of a woman: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." ¹³

The seed of the woman is the Messias, because to Him alone, as man, the Old Testament attributes the extinction of sin and victory over the father of sin.

b) The Messias will be a descendant of Abraham and a member of the Israelitic nation: "In thy [Abraham's] seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." ¹⁴

"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not near. A star shall rise out of Jacob and a scepter shall spring up from Israel." ¹⁵

¹³ Gen. III, 15: "*Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius, ipsa conteret caput tuum et tu insidiaberis calcaneo eius.*"

¹⁴ Gen. XXII, 18: "*Benedicentur in semine tuo [sc. Abrahæ] omnes gentes terræ.*" (Cfr. Gen. XXVI, 4; XXVIII, 14.)

¹⁵ Num. XXIV, 17: "*Videbo eum, sed non modo; intuebor*

That the seed of Abraham is the Messiah is evident from the fact that it is only to Him that the old Testament ascribes a dominion which shall shower benediction upon all the nations of the earth.

The prophet Balaam, too, has in view the Messianic Kingdom, the most magnificent flower of the house of Israel, when he predicts that in the distant future a star and a scepter shall spring up from Israel.¹⁶

c) The Messiah will be a son of David: "I will raise up thy seed after thee [*i. e.*, David], which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house to my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever."¹⁷

"There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him."¹⁸

illum, sed non prope. Orietur stella ex Iacob et consurget virga de Israel."

¹⁶ Num. XXIV, 17: "*Orietur stella ex Iacob, et consurget virga de Israel: et percutiet duces Moab, vastabitque omnes filios Seth.*"

¹⁷ 2 Kings VII, 12 sq.: "*Suscitabo semen tuum post te [sc. David], quod egredietur de utero tuo et firmabo regnum eius. Ipse aedificabit domum nomini meo et stabiliam thronum regni eius usque in sempiternum.*" (Cfr. Ps. LXXXVIII, 36 sqq.)

¹⁸ Is. XI, 1 sq.: "*Egredietur virga de radice Iesse et flos de radice eius ascendet, et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini.*"

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, and I will raise up to David a just branch: and a king shall reign, and shall be wise: and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. . . . and this is the name that they shall call him: The Lord our just one."¹⁹

The seed of David²⁰ comprises not only the Messiah, but all the descendants of the Royal Psalmist; first of all, as the context shows, Solomon, who built a temple to the Lord. That the Messiah is also included is indicated by the eternal duration which is promised to the kingdom of David's descendants. The promise is twofold: (α) an earthly kingdom, and this is conditional; (β) a spiritual kingdom, and this is absolute and everlasting. Luke I, 32-33: "*et dabit illi Dominus Deus sedem David patris eius: et regnabit in domo Jacob in aeternum, et regni eius non erit finis.*"

The flower that is to come forth from the root of Jesse (Is. XI, 1 sqq.) is, as the parallel pas-

¹⁹ Jer. XXIII, 5 sq.: "*Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Dominus, et suscitabo David germen iustum, et regnabit rex et sapiens erit et faciet iudicium et iustitiam in terra . . . et hoc est nomen, quod vocabunt eum: Dominus iustus noster.*" (Cfr. Jer. XXXIII, 14 sqq.) *Zémach* = *germen* is a name of the Messiah; cf. Zach. III, 8 and VI, 12. III, 8: "*ecce adducam servum meum Zémach;*" VI, 12: "*ecce vir Zémach nomen eius.*"

²⁰ 2 Kings VII, 12.

sages ²¹ show, the figure of the "servant of God," i. e., the Messiah.

Jer. XXIII, 5 sq. must be interpreted in the same sense, since this text attributes to the promised descendant of David a divine nature and the establishment of justice upon earth.

C. Time and Place of the Birth of the Messiah

a) *The Time of His Birth.*—The Old Testament furnishes three indications of the time when the Messiah was to be born.

a) *The Messiah will appear at the time when the tribe of Juda will have lost its political independence:* "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations." ²²

The Hebrew word *shebet* may also mean "rod of chastisement" and "tribe," but "scepter" is demanded here by the context. Only good things are promised to Juda, ²³ and there is no reason

²¹ Is. LIII, 2; XLII, 1, 3, 4, 6.

²² Gen. XLIX, 10: "*Non auferetur sceptrum de Iuda et dux de femore eius, donec veniat, qui mittendus est, et ipse erit exspectatio gentium.*"

²³ Gen. XLIX, 8: "*Iuda, te laudabunt fratres tui, manus tua in cervicibus inimicorum tuorum adorabunt te filii patris tui.*"

to see a rod of punishment threatening in the background, while, on the other hand, the Patriarch Jacob speaks not only of the person, but also of the tribe of Juda, as can be seen from a following verse.²⁴ The word *shebet* cannot in this passage be translated by "tribe," as this would result in the nonsensical phrase: "The tribe shall not be taken away from the tribe." Consequently the word *shebet* here can only mean "scepter." This is confirmed by the parallelism of the second half of the verse, which, according to the original Hebrew, had best be translated: "nor the sceptre away from between his feet."

It should be noted, however, that *shebet*, as here used, may not only signify a royal scepter, but, generally, the insignia of civil authority.

The particle *donec* (until) in itself merely indicates that something will last up to a more closely specified time. Whether it is to last beyond that period must be deduced from the context.

The "*qui mittendus est*" of the Vulgate is a translation of the Hebrew word *shiloh*, which may mean: "what is [stored-up] for him," "he who is preserved for him," "to whom it [the sceptre] is," "the man of peace," or "Silo" (a

²⁴ Gen. XLIX, 13.

city in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim). All these translations, with the exception of the last, would make good sense, since all can be applied to the Messias, of whom the entire passage clearly treats, as in the concluding words He is called "the expectation of nations."²⁵

The opinion that *shiloh* is intended to refer to the city of Silo is favored by the Rationalists, who regard our text as a *vaticinium post eventum* and translate it as follows: "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda . . . until he comes to Silo, and all nations will obey him." But this interpretation does not square with the facts. True, the tribe of Juda had a certain prerogative over the other tribes before it came to Silo. It was more numerous than the rest,²⁶ was assigned first place in camp²⁷ and on the march,²⁸ offered the first sacrifices,²⁹ was the first to receive its share of the promised land,³⁰ took the lead in the war which ensued after the death of Josue,³¹ and received the submission of the defeated Chananeans. But all of these preroga-

²⁵ *Hebraice*: "and in him (is) the obedience of nations." Cfr. Ps. II, 7 sqq.; Ps. LXXI, 8 sqq.

²⁶ Num. I, 26.

²⁷ Num. II, 3-9.

²⁸ Num. X, 14.

²⁹ Num. VII, 12.

³⁰ Jos. XV, 1.

³¹ Judg. I, 2.

tives are not sufficient to attribute to the tribe of Juda before its arrival in Silo that kind of public authority which goes with a royal scepter. The honors that were shown to Juda in the desert and when the Israelites entered the Holy Land only prove that this tribe was accorded a certain precedence over the others. The bearers of public authority were Moses the Levite and Josue the Ephraimite. After the death of Josue, it is true, the tribe of Juda was entrusted with the headship of the nation, but its dominion lasted only a short time and comprised a mere fraction of the tribes. The act of submission made by the Chanaanites was directed, not to the tribe of Juda alone, but to all the twelve tribes of Israel. The words of the Patriarch, therefore, can have no other meaning than: "The tribe of Juda will not be deprived of public authority until the arrival of Him to whom the nations shall bow in obedience."

Whether the public authority of the tribe of Juda was to end with the coming of the Messias cannot be deduced from the text. That it would lose its purely earthly significance and continue to exist in some other form, without destroying the political independence of the tribe, might have been inferred from the later prediction concerning the eternal duration of David's

throne and the spiritual character of the Messianic Kingdom. At any rate, after the complete destruction of the authority of the tribe of Juda, the coming of the Messiah was no longer to be expected. [Some of our ablest exegetes hold that "*non auferetur . . . donec veniat*" does not prove anything in this connection. According to the Hebrew idiom this text does not imply that the sceptre shall be taken away at all. It will in fact never be taken away, for "*et regni eius non erit finis.*" In Hebrew *until* after an affirmation does not deny, and after a negation does not affirm what follows. *E. g.*: 1 Reg. XV 35: "*et non addidit Samuel videre Saulem usque ad diem mortis suae.*" Ps. CIX, 1: "*sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.*" Ps. CXI, 8: "*non commovebitur [vir qui timet Dominum] donec despiciet inimicos suos.*"]

β) *The Messiah will appear in seventy year-weeks, reckoned from the promulgation of the decree which commanded the reconstruction of Jerusalem at the close of the Babylonian Captivity.* "Seventy weeks are shortened upon thy people," says the angel Gabriel to Daniel, "and upon thy holy city, that transgression may be finished, and sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished; and everlasting justice may

be brought; and vision and prophecy may be fulfilled; and the saint of saints may be anointed. Know thou, therefore, and take notice: that from the going forth of the word, to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the prince, there shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks: and the street shall be built again, and the walls in straitness of times. And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain: and the people that shall deny him shall not be his. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation. And he shall confirm the covenant with many, in one week: and in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail: and there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation: and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end.”³²

³² Dan. IX, 24-27: “*Septuaginta hebdomades abbreviatae sunt super populum tuum et super urbem sanctam tuam, ut consummetur praevaricatio et finem accipiat peccatum et deleatur iniquitas. et adducatur iustitia sempiterna et impleatur visio et prophetia et ungatur sanctus sanctorum* [Hebrew: *sanctum*.] *Scito ergo et animadvertite: ab exitu sermonis, ut iterum aedificetur Ierusalem usque ad Christum ducem hebdomades septem et hebdomades sexaginta duae erunt; et rursus aedificabitur platea et muri in angustia temporum. Et post hebdomades sexaginta duas occidetur Christus et non erit eius populus, qui eum negaturus est. Et civitatem et sanctuarium dissipabit populus cum duce venturo. Et fini-*

The seventy weeks appointed (Hebrew: *cut off*) by Yahweh cannot be ordinary weeks of seven days each. For, according to Dan. IX, 25, the streets and walls of the Holy City shall be rebuilt during the first seven of these weeks, which would be impossible within so short a time. According to Old Testament usage, the word translated by *week* means a seventh, consequently not only a week of seven days, but also a period of seven years, a "week of years," as it has been called,³³ and therefore the time indicated by this term was probably intended to be a period of 490 years. The reason the angel speaks of seventy weeks is to accommodate his revelation to the thoughts of the prophet, who had just been reflecting upon, and asked God to end, the seventy years of the Babylonian Captivity. The liberation of the Israelites after an exile of seventy years was to be followed by the liberation of the whole human race after seventy "weeks of years." The date from which this term is to be reckoned is the promulgation of the decree which commanded the rebuilding of Jeru-

eius vastitas et post finem belli statuta desolatio. Confirmabit autem pactum multis hebdomada una. Et in dimidio hebdomadis deficiet hostia et sacrificium et erit in templo abominatio desolationis et usque ad consummationem et finem perseverabit desolatio."

³³ Lev. XXV, 8; cfr. Gen. XXIX, 18, 27 sq.

saalem.³⁴ Its end must synchronize with the appearance and death of "Christ the prince."³⁵ Until the Messias-Prince appears, seven plus sixty-two, *i. e.*, sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, will elapse. In the seventieth week the Anointed will be slain, and a new covenant established. In the middle of this week the sacrifices of the Old Covenant will cease.³⁶ After the death of Christ, the Holy City and the Temple of Yahweh will be destroyed by the subjects of a foreign king. It does not, however, follow from the words of the angel³⁷ that the destruction of the city and Temple will occur immediately after the death of the Messias. That the "anointed one" of Dan. IX, 25 sq. is Jesus Christ, the promised Messias, is proved by the blessings promised to the people,³⁸ namely, forgiveness of sins, the establishment of eternal justice, and the confirmation of the new covenant.³⁹ All these indications point to the Messianic kingdom, for the Messias was the only one expected by the Jews who was to abolish iniquity and to found an everlasting kingdom of justice.

³⁴ Dan. IX, 25.

³⁵ Dan. IX, 25 sq.

³⁶ Dan. IX, 27.

³⁷ Dan. IX, 26 and 27.

³⁸ Dan. IX, 24.

³⁹ Dan. IX, 24, 27.

γ) *The Messiah will appear before the destruction of the second Temple.* "Behold I send my angel, . . . and presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to his temple."⁴⁰ The Messianic bearing of this text has already been established. The Messiah, we here read, shall come to his temple, that is, the Temple which had just been restored in the days of the Prophet Malachias (cfr. Agg. II, 9.) For this Temple, located at Jerusalem, was the only official sanctuary of the Jews, and hence the Messiah must appear before this Temple is destroyed.

b) *The Birthplace of the Messiah.*—The Messianic bearing of this text has already been pointed out. "And thou Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity."⁴¹ Ephrata is merely another name for Bethlehem.⁴² The seeming tautology serves to distinguish Bethle-

⁴⁰ Mal. III, 1: "*Ecce, mitto angelum meum. . . . Et statim veniet ad templum suum dominator, quem vos quaeritis et angelus testamenti, quem vos vultis.*"

⁴¹ Mich. V, 2: "*Et tu Bethlehem Ephrata, parvulus es in millibus Iuda: ex te mihi egredietur, qui sit dominator in Israel et egressus eius ab initio, a diebus aeternitatis.*"

⁴² Cfr. Gen. XXXV, 19; XLVIII, 7.

hem in Juda from a town of the same name situated in the territory of Zabulon.⁴³ The significance of Bethlehem in comparison with the other cities of Juda is emphasized in view of the sublime dignity to which this little town is to be raised by being made the birthplace of the Saviour of mankind.

The "ruler in Israel" who is to come forth from Bethlehem is none other than the Messias, because He alone established a kingdom of peace,⁴⁴ reaching "even to the ends of the earth," and because He alone, being God, exists from "the days of eternity."⁴⁵

D. The Passion and Death of the Messias

The Messias will die a violent death: "And after sixty-two weeks the Christ shall be slain."⁴⁶

He will be scourged and spit upon: "I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me."⁴⁷

⁴³ Jos. XIX, 15.

⁴⁴ Cfr. Mich. V, 5.

⁴⁵ Mich. V, 4.

⁴⁶ Dan. IX, 26: "*Post hebdomadas sexaginta duas occidetur Christus.*"

⁴⁷ Is. L, 6: "*Corpus meum dedi percutientibus et genas meas vel-*

He will be executed like a common criminal: "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter and shall be as dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth." ⁴⁸

"He hath delivered his soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked." ⁴⁹

His hands and feet will be pierced with nails: "They have dug my hands and feet; they have numbered all my bones." ⁵⁰

He will suffer vehement thirst: "My palate is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws." ⁵¹

He will be mocked and derided: "All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips and wagged with the head: He hoped in the Lord, let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him." ⁵²

His garments will be divided: "They parted

lentibus, faciem meam non averti ab increpantibus et conspuentibus in me."

⁴⁸ Is. LIII, 7: "*Sicut ovis ad occisionem ducetur et quasi agnus coram tondente se obmutescet et non aperiet os suum.*"

⁴⁹ Is. LIII, 12: "*Tradidit in mortem animam suam et cum sceleratis reputatus est.*"

⁵⁰ Ps. XXI, 17: "*Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos, dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea.*"

⁵¹ Ps. XXI, 16: "*Aruit tamquam testa virtus mea [Hebr.: palatus meus] et lingua mea adhaesit faucibus meis.*"

⁵² Ps. XXI, 8 sq.: "*Omnes videntes me deriserunt me, locuti sunt labiis et moverunt caput: speravit in domino, eripiat eum, salvum faciat eum, quoniam vult eum.*"

my garments amongst them; and upon my vesture they cast lots. ” ⁵³

The passages quoted from Daniel and Isaias have already been shown to be Messianic. Psalm XXI also refers to the promised Messiah, as is evident from verse 28, where the conversion of all nations to the true God is predicted as a result of the liberation effected by the suffering Messiah, and also from the substantial agreement of Ps. XXI with Is. L, 6 and LIII, 7, 12.

II. *The Fulfilment of the Messianic Prophecies of the Old Testament in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth*

The Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth and in no one else.

A. *The Mission and Activity of the Messiah*

a) *The Mission of the Messiah.*—Jesus appeared on earth as a king, a prophet, a lawgiver, and a priest.

a) Jesus is a king, ⁵⁴ whose spiritual realm ⁵⁵

⁵³ Ps. XXI, 19: “*Diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea et super vestem meam miserunt sortem.*”

⁵⁴ John XVIII, 37; XIX, 12; Matth. XXVII, 29, 37.

⁵⁵ John XVIII, 36.

comprises all nations, extends to the very ends of the earth,⁵⁶ and endures to the end of time,⁵⁷ nay, reaches into eternity.⁵⁸ His kingdom is a kingdom of justice and peace, from which sin and iniquity are excluded;⁵⁹ God and His justice are set up as the goal of life,⁶⁰ and His perfection is presented as a pattern-exemplar for men to imitate.⁶¹ Love of neighbor, including one's enemies, is the mark of a true disciple of Jesus⁶² and furnishes the surest guarantee of enduring peace of the kind which He promised to His disciples.⁶³

β) Jesus is also a prophet,⁶⁴ a teacher,⁶⁵ a law-giver,⁶⁶ the founder of a new universal and eternal covenant.⁶⁷

γ) He is furthermore a priest, who voluntarily lays down His life as a victim for the sins of all men.⁶⁸ His bloody atonement is inti-

⁵⁶ Matth. XXVIII, 18 sq.

⁵⁷ Matth. XXVIII, 20.

⁵⁸ Luke I, 32 sq.

⁵⁹ Luke XIX, 10; Matth. XXVI, 28.

⁶⁰ Matth. VI, 33.

⁶¹ Matth. V, 48.

⁶² Matth. V, 43 sq.; John XIII, 34 sq.

⁶³ Matth. XI, 29; John XIV, 27.

⁶⁴ John I, 45; V, 45 sqq.

⁶⁵ Matth. XXIII, 10; IV, 23; Mark VI, 2, 6; John III, 2.

⁶⁶ Matth. V, 21 sqq.

⁶⁷ Matth. XXVI, 28; 1 Cor. XI, 25 sq.

⁶⁸ John X, 15, 17 sq.; I, 29; Matth. XXVI, 28.

mately bound up with an unbloody sacrifice.⁶⁹

b) *The Work of the Messias*.—The public ministry of Jesus is (a) introduced by a fore-runner.⁷⁰ Jesus is (β) pleasing to God,⁷¹ meek and humble of heart,⁷² and a friend of the poor.⁷³ (γ) He works miracles⁷⁴ and devotes Himself to teaching the multitudes, especially in Galilee.⁷⁵

B. The Divine Dignity and Human Descent of the Messias

Jesus is (a) consubstantial with the Father, *i. e.*, of the same divine nature, and (b) a descendant of Abraham, a son of David, born of the virgin Mary.⁷⁶

C. Time and Place of His Birth

a) *The Time*.—Jesus (a) was born soon after the tribe of Juda had lost its political independence. What little authority and influence it re-

⁶⁹ Luke XXII, 19; 1 Cor. XI, 24 sqq.; John VI, 52.

⁷⁰ Matth. III; Mark I, 2-9; Luke III, 1-18; John I, 19-27; Matth. XI, 10.

⁷¹ Matth. III, 17.

⁷² Matth. XI, 29; XXI, 1 sqq.; XII, 17 sqq.

⁷³ Luke IV, 18; XIX, 10.

⁷⁴ Matth. XI, 5.

⁷⁵ Matth. IV, 14 sqq.

⁷⁶ Matth. I, 1 sqq.; Luke I, 31 sq.; Rom. I, 3; Matth. IX, 27; XII, 23; XX, 29 sqq.; XXII, 42.

tained when He entered the world, vanished soon after. Juda was the most important and influential tribe from the beginning of the reign of David until the Babylonian Captivity, because it furnished the Jewish nation with kings. During the Captivity, the autonomy of the nation was not entirely destroyed, since the Jews retained their own judges.⁷⁷ After the Captivity, Zorobabel assumed the reins of government. Esdras, a priest of the tribe of Levi, instituted judges, who administered the law according to the Mosaic prescriptions.⁷⁸ Under the Machabees the tribe of Levi once more to a certain extent regained its prestige. The high priest Simon became the leader of the people by common consent.⁷⁹ Under Herod and the Roman procurators the Jews still had their own courts, as the example of the adulteress,⁸⁰ that of the man born blind,⁸¹ and the reply of Pilate⁸² show. Only the right to inflict capital punishment seems to have been denied them.⁸³ The tribe of Juda lost its "sceptre" in the year 588

⁷⁷ Dan. XIII, 5, 41 sqq.

⁷⁸ 1 Esd. VII, 25 sq.

⁷⁹ 1 Mach. XIV, 41 sq.

⁸⁰ John VIII, 3 sqq.

⁸¹ John IX.

⁸² John XVIII, 31.

⁸³ John XVIII, 31.

(586), when Sedekias, the last king of Juda, was led away captive. This was the temporal part of the promise made to David, which, because conditioned by the behavior of the kings, ceased with Sedekias. The spiritual part of the promise was absolute, and in this aspect the throne of David is everlasting.

β) Jesus began His public career seventy "weeks of years," *i. e.*, 490 calendar years after the promulgation of the decree which ordered the rebuilding of Jerusalem. It is impossible to calculate with mathematical accuracy the duration of the term set in Daniel's prophecy, for the reason that we do not know the *terminus a quo*, nor the duration of the rule of the various Persian kings, nor the exact year of the birth of Jesus. For the *terminus a quo* four royal decrees: (1) the decree issued by Cyrus, in the first year of his rule (B.C. 535), giving permission to rebuild the Temple;⁸⁴ (2) the decree promulgated by Darius Hystaspes in the second year of his reign (519), which merely confirmed the decree of Cyrus;⁸⁵ (3) the decree issued by Artaxerxes Longimanus in the seventh year of his reign (458),⁸⁶ and (4) the decree issued by

⁸⁴ 1 Esd. I, 2-4; VI, 1-5; 2 Par. XXXVI, 22 sq.

⁸⁵ 1 Esd. IV, 24; VI, 1 sqq.

⁸⁶ 1 Esd. VII, 1 sqq.; 13 sqq.

the same king in the twentieth year of his rule.⁸⁷ Those who reckon the Danielic era from the date of the last-mentioned decree, place it in the year 454 B. C. and attempt to show that the rule of Artaxerxes began ten years earlier than has been commonly supposed, that is to say, B. C. 474. It would lead us too far afield to investigate the chronology of the Persian kings, and we simply take the commonly assumed dates as the basis of our calculation.

According to the Christian or Dionysian computation of time, the birth of Christ took place in 754 *u. c.* (*i. e.*, after the founding of Rome), but it is now commonly held that this date is somewhat too late. Since Herod the Great died in 750 *u. c.*, and Christ, according to the Gospel of St. Matthew,⁸⁸ was born during the reign of this cruel tyrant, the date of His birth must be pushed back at least four years. Chronologists, for reasons which it is not necessary to rehearse here, generally place it towards the end of the year 747 *u. c.* (B. C. 6).

Assuming this figure to be correct, and taking the decree of Cyrus (535 B. C.) as the *terminus a quo* of our calculation, the end of the sixty-ninth week "of years," or the 483rd year, in

⁸⁷ 2 Esd. I, 2 sqq.; II, 1 sqq.

⁸⁸ Matth. II, 1, 22.

which the Messiah was to begin his public career ⁸⁹ according to the prophecy of Daniel, would be 52 B. C. But it is not likely that this decree was meant by the prophesying angel, as it only gives permission to rebuild the Temple, but not the city of Jerusalem.

Since the second decree, promulgated by Darius, is merely a repetition of the first, issued by Cyrus, it can be ignored for our present purpose.

If we reckon from the third of the decrees mentioned, namely, that of Artaxerxes, issued in the seventh year of his rule (B. C. 458), the end of the sixty-ninth "week" falls into the year 25 A. D., and the middle of the seventieth week three and one-half years later, in the year 28-29 A. D. Adding to this figure the six years' difference in the reckoning of the Christian era, as explained above, we obtain 31 A. D. as the beginning of Christ's public career, and 34 A. D. as the year of His death. These figures closely approximate the Lucan account of the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. In favor of the third decree we may also mention the fact that Esdras not only received permission to reinstate the worship of Yahweh in the Temple, but was expressly commanded to "appoint

⁸⁹ "*Usque ad Christum ducem.*"

judges and magistrates,"⁹⁰ which he could hardly have done without regulating other public affairs and unless he had received permission to rebuild the city.

If we take the fourth decree, issued in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes (454 B.C.) as our point of departure, we get the year 29 A.D. of the Dionysian era as the end of the sixty-ninth "week" and 32-33 A.D. as the middle of the seventieth "week," which would be in perfect agreement with the Gospel of St. Luke. One argument in favor of this reckoning is that the decree of Artaxerxes clearly mentions the restoration of the city and its walls and gates.⁹¹ But since the Dionysian era is not quite correct and the reign of Artaxerxes, contrary to the traditional view, has to be lengthened by ten years in order that the decree in question can be made to fall within his reign, and since the second decree of Artaxerxes, like that of Darius, was merely a repetition of a previous one, issued in the seventh year of his reign, we are forced to conclude that the fourth decree cannot be the one referred to by the angel, but that our reckoning of the "weeks" must begin with the first decree of Artaxerxes in the

⁹⁰ 1 Esd. VII, 25 sq.

⁹¹ 2 Esd. II, 3, 5, 8 sq.; 13, 17.

seventh year of his reign. But even if the second decree of Artaxerxes were taken as a basis, the calculation would bring us somewhere near the year 30, which is sufficient to show that the Danielic prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.⁹²

⁹² It is proper to add that the interpretation of this Danielic prophecy is rather uncertain. Something like a hundred different interpretations have been attempted (cfr. F. Fraid, *Die Exegese der siebenzig Wochen Daniels in der alten und mittleren Zeit*, Graz, 1883). The latest Catholic commentator on the Book of Daniel, Prof. J. Goettsberger, says that the only way to arrive at a satisfactory understanding of the text is to pay due attention to the definite statements contained therein. Most rationalist critics reject it entirely as a *vaticinium post eventum*. Others apply it to the period of the Machabees. Among Catholic exegetes, Lagrange, Riessler, and Szczygiel accept this interpretation in part, but insist that the text is truly prophetic and that Daniel, together with the period of the Machabees, surveyed with true prophetic vision the time of the Messiah and the end of the world. The great majority of Catholic exegetes, however, regard Dn. IX, 24-27 as an exclusively Messianic prophecy, though most of them admit that the seventy "weeks of years" do not permit of any close computation. In the opinion of Dr. Goettsberger, the angel simply wishes to impress upon the prophet, who probably expected more than a mere restoration of the Jewish nation after the expiration of the seventy years, that he had better figures with "sevenths," i. e. "weeks of years." "As a matter of fact," says this commentator, "no computation yet made has found general acceptance. Even the Machabean interpretation, which for the most part begins to reckon from 605-588, the term which seems to have the best exegetical foundation, finds itself compelled to abbreviate the Danielic chronology. The Messianic interpretation seems to lose weight as a Christological argument if we forego a definite calculation; but the loss is only apparent, since while most exegetes claim to be able to calculate the time of Christ's ministry and death almost to the day and the hour, no two of them agree in

The death of Jesus expunged sin and satisfied divine justice. The bloody sacrifice of the Divine Mediator, unbloodily repeated in the Mass, takes the place of the Old Testament sacrifices,

their results. If we leave aside the seventy 'weeks of years' as a definite indication of time, we can ascertain the *terminus a quo* as well as the *terminus ad quem* of this period purely on the basis of objective indications contained in the text. These indications point with a reliability that can hardly be questioned to the prophecy of Jeremias, or its fulfilment, that is to say, 605-588 B.C., as the *terminus a quo* of the seventy weeks of years. It is more difficult to ascertain the *terminus ad quem*, i.e., the last week of years, because about one-half of the indications are not clear, and among those which can be interpreted, some fit the period of the Machabees just as well as the time of the Messiah. Assuming that, if we had a clearer knowledge of the facts, the uncertain momenta would favor partly the one and partly the other view, as is generally the case, we can still draw several conclusions from the clear indications contained in the sacred text. Daniel's principal prophecies (cfr. ch. II and VII) refer ultimately to the period of the Messiah. Chapter IX would require only one step farther to turn the prophecy concerning the coming visitation into the traditional prediction concerning the Messianic kingdom. Perhaps the abrupt close of this chapter is owing to the absence of some complementary verses which have been lost. That the prophet had these things in mind, or rather, heard the angel utter them, is indicated by the phrase 'everlasting justice' (IX, 24), which cannot be explained on any other hypothesis. Aside from these meagre Messianic indications, the trend of the prophecy leads us only to the threshold of the new era, the Messianic kingdom, as it were. Of the salient features, however, so many are certainly applicable to the period of the Machabees, that they cannot be taken out of the prophet's field of vision. Thus Ch. IX stands among prophecies which, according to the common opinion of exegetes, deal exclusively or predominantly with the Machabean period (cfr. ch. VIII and X sqq.). Moreover, the close objective

which, as a consequence, lose their juridical significance and importance towards the middle of the seventieth "week." The shedding of Christ's sacrificial blood inaugurates the New Covenant, which is intended to embrace the whole of humanity. Forty years later the divine punishment came upon the Jewish nation for its refusal to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. A Roman army under Titus (*populus cum duce venturo*) destroyed the City and the

connection with ch. VIII leads us to expect in ch. IX principally clarification and supplementary information to ch. VIII, i. e., to a prophecy applying to the time of the Machabees. The 2,300 evenings and mornings (VIII, 14) objectively and in extent coincide with the 'half of the week' in IX, 27 (cfr. also XII, 7). The 'iniquity' (VIII, 13-IX, 24), and the consummation of that iniquity (VIII, 23-IX, 24), and such phrases as 'he shall lay all things waste' (VIII, 24 sq. IX, 26), 'the end thereof shall be waste' (IX, 26), 'the abomination of desolation' (VIII, 13-IX, 27; cfr. XI, 31) not only refer to a series of similar occurrences, but together with other indications point to the identity of the epoch described by the prophet. Already in ancient times, therefore, Josephus saw a fulfilment of the Danielic prophecy in the epoch of the Machabees (*Ant.*, XII, 7, 6) and a later fulfilment in the epoch of Titus (*ibid.*, X, 11, 7). And to mention a more authoritative interpretation, 1 Mach. 1, 54 now without reason derives the 'abomination of desolation' from Dan. IX, 27, in order to stigmatize the wicked deed of Antiochus, while our Divine Saviour Himself employs the same expression with direct reference to Daniel in order to describe the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus and the end of the world (Matth. XXIV 15 sq.; Mark XIII, 14). It was precisely the application of the prophecy of Daniel to the events of the Messianic epoch which gave to later Christian exegetes the occasion and the right to

Temple. Thus the Danielic prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

γ) That Jesus lived before the destruction of the second Temple needs no proof in view of the fact that He repeatedly visited this Temple during His public career, preached to the people in its hallowed precincts, and was deeply interested in protecting it from profanation.

b) *The Birth Place of the Messias*.—Jesus of Nazareth was born at *Bethlehem* in the tribe of Juda, as St. Matthew and St. Luke testify.⁹³

point out a series of other Messianic details in Dan. IX, 24-27, without excluding the immediate interpretation of the text as applying to the Machabees. It was bound to strike the reader that twice, at a decisive turn in the history of the Chosen People, an 'anointed saint' or 'Christ' appeared, after the expiration of the seven weeks of years and after the sixty-two weeks of years. This directs attention to the 'anointed one' in the most exalted sense of the term, *i. e.*, Christ the Messias, who combined in His person the anointed king (Cyrus) and the suffering and dying Christ, *i. e.*, the high priest of the Machabean era. That the laying waste of the city and the sanctuary which in the Machabean epoch precedes the decisive turn of affairs, in the Messianic era followed the appearance of the Saviour at some distance (destruction of the city and the Temple under Titus, A.D. 70) does not prevent us from seeing in the two events a type and its anti-type. It seems peculiar, yet lies entirely within the limits of the Christian interpretation of Old Testament types of the Messias, that the abolition of the daily sacrifice, which was an act of persecution of the Machabean epoch, is regarded as a Messianic act of grace prefiguring the substitution for the sacrifices of the Old Law of the one everlasting sacrifice of the New Law. . . ." (J. Goettsberger, *Das Buch Daniel übersetzt und erklärt*, Bonn, 1928, pp. 74 sqq.)

⁹³ Matth. II, 1; Luke II, 4 sqq., 15 sq.

D. Passion and Death of the Messias

Jesus died a violent death.⁹⁴ He was scourged, spit upon, and handed over like a criminal to His executioners.⁹⁵ His hands and feet were pierced with nails;⁹⁶ He suffered intense thirst;⁹⁷ He was mocked and derided in His suffering,⁹⁸ and His garments were divided by lot among His executioners.⁹⁹

III. The Messianic Predictions of the Prophets Were Genuine Prophecies

The Messianic pronouncements of the prophets, which, as we have seen, were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, contain numerous details that depended entirely upon the free will of God and the co-operation of human agents. The certain knowledge and definite prediction of these details centuries before their realization was possible only through a divine revelation. Therefore, the predictions in question must be regarded as genuine prophecies and, further-

⁹⁴ Matth. XXVII, 50; Mark XV, 37; John XIX, 30, 34.

⁹⁵ Mark XV, 15; John XIX, 1; Matth. XXVI, 67; John, XVIII, 30.

⁹⁶ John XX, 25 sqq.

⁹⁷ John XIX, 20.

⁹⁸ Matth. XXVII, 39 sqq.

⁹⁹ Matth. XXVII, 35; John XIX, 23 sqq.

more, they must be absolutely true. Now since, among other things, they mention the divine mission and dignity of the Messias, their fulfilment was a supernatural confirmation of that mission and of the dignity of Jesus of Nazareth, and, consequently, the teaching of Jesus—in other words, the Christian religion—is clearly of divine origin.

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§ III. OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT PARALLELS FROM THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

Introductory Remarks

Both Judaism and Christianity are, as we have seen, based on supernatural, divine revelation. The Rationalist critics, of course, do not admit this conclusion. Eager to explain all religious phenomena by purely natural means, they point to certain kindred doctrines, rites, and customs to be met with in other religions, and to certain analogous phenomena in the lives of their respective founders, and conclude from these so-called "parallels" that the Jewish and Christian religions are purely natural phenomena, more or less on a level with other, non-revealed religions.

These parallels are taken from the history of comparative religion. To judge them correctly, we must bear in mind the following considerations:

1. *A revealed religion need not be distinguished in every respect from purely natural religions.* Much that is good and true in human nature is found outside of revelation, and the grace of God "enlighteneth every man that

cometh into this world." ¹ Therefore, the possibility of a certain agreement between the supernatural and purely natural religions in doctrines, precepts, and customs cannot be denied *a priori*.

2. *The actually existing similarities between revealed religion and the natural religions of mankind may be traced partly to borrowing, partly to positive divine ordinances, and partly to independent natural development.*

a) *Borrowing* is excluded in everything that pertains to the intrinsic essence of the religions of the Old and the New Testament, for the simple reason that, as a matter of fact, these religions have been supernaturally revealed. The supernatural truths contained in them, and the miracles and prophecies accompanying their manifestations, as well as everything pertaining to their respective founders, being divinely revealed, cannot have been borrowed from other religions. The case is different with historical accounts, external ceremonies and usages, philosophical ideas, phrases, and notions; these can be transferred from a purely natural to a supernaturally revealed religion without derogating from the latter's prerogatives, and thus placed in the service of divine truth. However, no such

¹ John I, 9.

borrowing is to be admitted unless it can be proved by conclusive historical evidence.

b) *Actually existing parallels may be the result of a positive divine ordinance.* Where this can be historically demonstrated, it forms the only acceptable explanation of the agreement.

c) *Where neither the fact of borrowing nor any divine ordinance can be proved, there remains but one possible explanation, namely, independent natural development.* Since human nature is identical in all individuals of the species and its faculties develop more or less in the same way, the religious needs of man are everywhere the same, and, consequently, produce pretty much the same forms of religious activity and the same religious opinions in most widely different nations and individuals. And as the supernatural does not suppress and destroy, but rather elevates and perfects nature, the products of natural religious development may easily have been, by divine direction, incorporated with revealed religion and thus subordinated to a higher purpose.

We shall now proceed to consider certain phenomena from the history of comparative religion which have more or less definite counterparts in the Bible, and try to understand their rela-

tion to their Biblical parallels in the light of the principles laid down in the preceding paragraphs.

I. Old Testament Parallels from the History of Religions

These parallels are principally six, namely: (1) The Babylonian account of the Creation; (2) Paradise and the Fall of man; (3) the Deluge; (4) Monotheism, (5) the laws of ancient Babylonia, and (6) the Babylonian and Persian doctrine of the angels.²

1. The Babylonian Account of the Creation

The most familiar and important of the Babylonian creation stories is the epic known from its opening words as *Enuma elish*. It begins with the marriage of Apshu (the male) and Tiamat (the female principle), personifications of sweet and salt water. From this union spring the various higher and lower deities. In course of time Tiamat and the lower deities rebel against the

² Cfr. G. Teichmüller, *Religionsphilosophie*, Breslau, 1886; F. Delitzsch, *Babel und Bibel*, Leipzig, 1921; P. Jensen, *Das Gilgameschepos in der Weltliteratur*, Strasbourg, 1906; A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament, im Lichte des alten Orients*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1906. (*The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, tr. by C. L. Beaumont, ed. by C. H. W. Johns, 2 vols., New York and London, 1911).

primeval powers. Tiamat spawns an army of gruesome monsters and assigns the leadership in battle to her son Kingu. The higher deities hold a war council and prepare for the fray. Marduk, the son of Ea, is commissioned to open the battle. He goes to meet the mad goddess Tiamat, catches her in a net, and after piercing her with an arrow, splits the carcass into two parts "like a shell-fish." One half he erects into the dome of the sky with mansions for Anu, Enlil, and Ea. He affixes the signs of the zodiac upon the firmament, opens the gates of the sun, causes the moon to shine at night, and regulates her phases. Of the Babylonian view of the origin of the animal and vegetable kingdoms we know very little, since the respective tablets have mostly perished.³

If we compare the Babylonian story of the creation with that given in Genesis, we find a certain similarity between the two. In both accounts the water is the *terminus a quo*; in both the sky divides the upper from the lower waters; both describe the origin of men, plants, and animals. The word Tiamat, which in the Babylo-

³ Cfr. H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testamente*, Tübingen, 1909, pp. 5 sqq.; W. L. Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, London and New York, 1925, pp. 140-145; E. A. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, London and New York, s. a., pp. 77-97.

nian account designates the primeval ocean, recurs in form and content in *tehom* (the deep) of the First Book of Moses.

In some parts of the Bible, just as in the Babylonian story, the creative transformation of the primitive chaos is represented as a victory over two sea-monsters, called, respectively, Rahab and Leviathan. Thus we read in the Book of Job: "By his power the seas are suddenly gathered together, and his wisdom has struck Rahab." ⁴ And in the Psalms: "Thou rulest the powers of the sea: and appeasest the motion of the waves thereof. Thou hast crushed Rahab as one that is slain: with the arm of thy strength thou hast scattered thy enemies." ⁵ "But Elohim is my king before ages: he hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth. Thou didst split the sea by thy strength: thou didst crush the heads of the dragons in the waters, thou hast broken the heads of Leviathan." ⁶

Do these slim resemblances prove, as Rationalist critics pretend, that the Biblical account of the Creation was copied from the Babylonian legend?

⁴ Job XXVI, 12; cfr. M. Jastrow, *Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions* in E. H. Sneath, *Religion and the Future Life*, p. 121.

⁵ Ps. LXXXIX, 10 sq. (Hebrew text); cfr. Is. LI, 9; Job IX, 13.

⁶ Ps. LXXIV, 12 sqq.; cfr. Is. XXVII, 1.

Undoubtedly there exists some sort of connection, and also a certain dependence, between the two accounts. But this dependence is limited to the words by which different thoughts are expressed. Words like Tehom (= Tiamat), Tohu wa Bohu⁷ may have been derived from the mythological conceptions which the author of Genesis found current among his pagan contemporaries. The form of the narrative may be borrowed from Babylonian sources, but the doctrine is new. In Genesis we no longer have a personification of the pristine ocean, but that ocean itself.

As regards the Biblical account of the Creation itself, it in no way objectively depends upon the Babylonian epic. The two stories differ essentially from each other. The battle between Marduk and Tiamat, which is the main topic of the Babylonian legend, is not even mentioned in the Bible, which describes the creation of the world as taking place in a definite order and in the course of a fixed period of time (six days); these important details are missing in the Babylonian myth. In the Bible the creation refers only to the world, whereas in the Babylonian epic cosmogony and theogony are intimately united. The Biblical account is

⁷ Gen. I, 2.

purely Monotheistic, whereas the Babylonian legend is inspired by Polytheistic ideas. The Bible says that heaven and earth were created out of nothing, whereas the Babylonian story presupposes a protyle (*materia prima*), i. e., water, as pre-existing from all eternity. The Bible describes a true creation out of nothing, whereas the Babylonian myth deals merely with the shaping of the world out of pre-existing matter. In view of these differences Dr. Jeremias justly says: "The prevailing assumption of a literary dependence of the Biblical records of creation upon Babylonian texts is very frail, and, in view of the universality of the idea of the beginning and development of the worlds, need not be considered at all, or at any rate (as in the case of the Flood) only in a very secondary degree."⁸ And Dr. Wardle: "The evidence seems to warrant the conclusion that *enuma elish* was known to the authors of the early chapters of Genesis, but that their position is not so much one of dependence upon as of revulsion from it. . . . Whatever points of agreement may be found between *enuma elish* and the creation story of Gen. I are . . . almost insignificant when contrasted with the points of difference,

⁸ *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, Vol. I, pp. 196 sqq.

and are to be found in the form rather than in the spirit. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the likeness between them is comparable with such a likeness as might be found between Caliban, studying theology on his island, and Augustine.”⁹ And Dr. Wallis Budge: “The account of the Creation given in Genesis and the Story of the Flood are not derived from any Babylonian version of them known to us. There are many points of resemblance between the cuneiform and the Hebrew versions, and these often illustrate each other, but the fundamental conceptions are essentially different. The Babylonian god was a development from devils and horrible monsters of foul form, but the God of the Hebrews was a Being who existed in and from the beginning, Almighty and Alone, and the devils of chaos and evil were from the beginning His servants.”¹⁰

⁹ B. Landsdell Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, pp. 166 sq.

¹⁰ E. A. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, pp. IX sq. On the origin of the Creation as told in the Seven Tablets and the various forms of it current in Assyria and Babylonia the student should consult the little work, *Babylonian Legends of the Creation and the Fight between Bêl and the Dragon*, London, 1921, published by the Trustees of the British Museum. The editors agree with Dr. Budge in his opinion that there is no evidence at all that the two accounts of the creation which are given in the early chapters of Genesis are derived from the Seven Tablets. (Cfr. Budge, *l.c.*, p. 85).

Such fragments of truth as are found in the Babylonian epic in spite of the dense mythological over-growth that distorts it, are probably traceable to primitive revelation and the pristine traditions of the human race, from which the Bible, too, has drawn.

2. Paradise and the Fall

Reminiscences of the Biblical story of Paradise and the Fall of our First Parents occur in the mythologies of nearly all nations, most definitely in that of the Babylonians.¹¹

¹¹ The attempts to find the original of the Biblical story in the literature of Babylonia date from the time of George Smith, who over half a century ago informed the London *Daily Telegraph* that he had discovered a cuneiform tablet containing the story of man's original innocence, of his temptation and Fall. Unfortunately criticism soon proved that he had read into his document what it did not really contain. The most elaborate attempt in this direction (aside from F. Delitzsch's *Babel und Bibel*, *cfr. infra*, 618) was made by S. Langdon in his book, *The Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood, and the Fall of Man*. Dr. Wardle, after summing up Langdon's argument, says: "The points of comparison with the Garden of Eden story which Langdon finds [in the text published by him, described as a hymn of praise and presumably antedating the Hebrew version of the Fall by 'at least a thousand years'] are chiefly the idyllic state which his version portrays at the beginning, and the eating of a forbidden fruit in a garden. A reader of the translation as Langdon himself gives it cannot help feeling that most of the parallelism which the author finds with the Old Testament has to be read into the text." (Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, p. 183).

The *tree of life* has a parallel in the Adapa legend. Adapa the Wise, son of Ea, who serves as a priest in Eridu, the place where his father is worshipped, revengefully breaks the wings of the south wind, which had dashed his boat to pieces. For this crime Anu, the god of heaven, summons Adapa into his presence. Ea calls Adapa's attention to Anu's purpose and warns him neither to eat nor to drink the food and water offered him by Anu. Guided by Anu's messengers, Adapa ascends to heaven. When Anu tells his doorkeepers to offer Adapa food and drink, the latter, mindful of his father's warning, declines and, as a consequence, forfeits the gift of immortality which Anu was ready to bestow upon him.¹²

The *History of Gilgamesh* contains a parallel to the happy life of our First Parents in Paradise. Gilgamesh, a great and wise king,¹³ part god and part man, eager to obtain eternal

¹² Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testamente*, pp. 34 sqq.; Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, pp. 142 sq.

¹³ Gilgamesh (or Gilgamish), according to an ancient list, was the fifth king of a Sumerian dynasty that ruled at Erech, and reigned 126 years. (See C. J. Gadd, *Early Dynasties of Sumer and Akkad*, London, 1921, p. 36.) The so-called History of Gilgamesh, or Gilgamesh epic, was written upon a series of twelve tablets, which were preserved in the library of Nabû at Nineveh. (Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, p. 89).

life, decides to look up his ancestor, Uta-Napishtim, the Babylonian Noe, who enjoys everlasting felicity somewhere in the far distant West. He arrives at the isle of the blessed, where Uta-Napishtim lives, but fails to obtain eternal life because "the gods had decreed the fate of every man, and that death was the lot of all men." Uta-Napishtim then tells him the story of the Flood.¹⁴ However, through the good offices of his ancestor, he obtains a certain plant which grows at the bottom of the sea and has the power of renewing youth. Unfortunately this plant is discovered and eaten by a serpent while Gilgamesh bathes in a pool of water, and thus in the end he loses the precious gift of immortality.¹⁵

To the same group of pagan parallels belongs the *sacred tree* which we find depicted on Babylonian seal cylinders and Assyrian palace reliefs. The tree is loaded with fruit and usually surrounded by winged genii in a standing or kneeling posture.¹⁶ The most remarkable picture of this kind is found on a Babylonian seal cylinder which Dr. Delitzsch describes as follows: "On

¹⁴ Cfr. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, pp. 91-95.

¹⁵ Gressmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 46 sqq.; Wallis Budge, *op. cit.*, pp. 96 sq.; Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, pp. 99 sq., 185 sq.; J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, Vol. I, pp. 49-51.

¹⁶ Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, Vol. I, pp. 207 sqq.

the right is the man, to be recognized by the horns, the symbol of strength; on the left the woman; both reaching out their hands to the fruit. And behind the woman is a serpent."¹⁷ No text explaining the picture has so far been discovered.

a) The Adapa myth has a few traits that remind one of the Biblical narrative. Some critics hold that the Babylonians regarded Adapa, who was directly created by Ea, as the first human being. Others deny this assumption because the ancient poem says that he was created as a wise man "among men." Still others derive the name Adam from Adapa, which is, however, a purely arbitrary conjecture, not generally accepted by linguists. There is no reason that would justify us in identifying Adapa with Adam.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Babel and Bible*, Engl. tr., p. 56; see reproduction of this cylinder in Jeremias, *op. cit.*, I, 220. The line behind the sitting figure is obviously a serpent, though its position does not correspond with the place it would hold in a drawing of the Fall. The view put forward by Oppert, Halévy, and others, that the line is only an ornamentation, is declared "not tenable" by Dr. Jeremias (*l.c.*).

¹⁸ Sayce (*Archæology of the Cuneiform Inscriptions*, p. 91) asserts that the names Adapa and Adam are philological equivalents, so that Adapa might actually be read Adam. But though the sign for *pa*, the last syllable of Adapa's name, sometimes has the value of *mu*, Langdon has conclusively disproved Sayce's contention by producing examples where the name Adapa is written Adapad. Wardle (*Israel and Babylon*, p. 190 sq.) says: "The at-

A certain agreement between the Babylonian and the Biblical accounts is found in the story of the *proffered or forbidden gift*. Ea tells Adapa: "They will offer you food and drink that will cause your death;" but in matter of fact Anu offers him food and drink that insures eternal life. In Gen. II, 17 God forbids Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree of life: "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat; for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." The serpent on the contrary assures Eve: "No, you shall not die the death," but "in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."¹⁹

These resemblances, however, are offset by *important differences*. The question: How did death and suffering originate? is answered by the Bible very definitely as follows: Death and suffering are the effects of the sin committed by our First Parents in Paradise. According to the Adapa myth, the ultimate cause of sin and suffer-

tempt to make, as Stucken does, a relation between the garment given to Adapa by the gods and the clothing furnished to Adam and Eve by God, may be dismissed as unworthy of serious consideration. And in any case Adapa was not the first man: the Babylonian document tells us that Ea created Adapa 'among men' (*ina ameluti*)."

¹⁹ Gen. II, 4 sq.

ing is an error or envy on the part of the god Ea. Moreover, the Biblical account of the Fall is purely Monotheistic in tone and tendency, whereas the Babylonian myth rests upon Polytheistic assumptions.

In the Adapa myth, finally, the woman and the seducer of the Biblical account are absent, and the gift of immortality is lost, not through the eating of the proffered fruit, but through man's refusal to partake of it.

In view of these numerous and radical divergencies the two stories must be regarded as essentially different and the Biblical account cannot possibly have been derived from the Adapa myth.²⁰

b) The *Gilgamesh epic* coincides with the Adapa myth in its fundamental lesson, namely, that even the wisest and most powerful of men cannot attain immortality, because this privilege is exclusively reserved to the gods. This thought is diametrically opposed to the Biblical doctrine that God originally promised man to endow him with everlasting life.

²⁰ "Examination of the alleged parallels shows that actually the only idea common to the myth of Adapa and the story of Paradise is the conception of a food that confers immortality. This conception is much too wide-spread for us to deduce from it that there is any direct dependence of the Biblical story on the myth." (Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, p. 191).

The few resemblances that exist between the Gilgamesh epic and the Bible are offset by great divergences. Both accounts describe a place of unending life and beatitude, and both assert that a serpent frustrated man's eternal happiness. But, according to the Babylonian account, this place is a far-off island in the western sea, whereas the Bible describes the Paradise of delight as situated on the continent. The Babylonian island of the blessed is the abode of those who have completed their earthly career, whereas the Paradise of the Bible marks the beginning of man's life on earth. In Paradise our First Parents are denied the fruit of the tree of life and lose immortality as a result of a sin committed at the instigation of the serpent, whereas Gilgamesh fails to attain immortality through an accident, a serpent having stolen the wonderful plant from him.²¹

²¹ The idea that the partaking of a certain food will confer upon a mortal the gift of immortality clearly forms a point of contact with the Old Testament. But the parallelism is carried to undue limits by some writers. Dr. Jirku, for example (*Altorientalischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament*, p. 25), says that Ea deliberately deceived Adapa, so that Adapa might not obtain immortality, and compares Gen. III, 22, where Yahweh is fearful lest man, having become "as one of us" in knowledge, should eat of the fruit of the tree of life and live for ever. A. Jeremias, noting the suggestion of the envy of God contained in the serpent's words (Gen. III, 5), finds (*The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, I, p. 184) a very close parallel with the myth of

As can be easily seen from these indications, the two accounts differ from each other in so many essential particulars that the Gilgamesh epic cannot possibly be regarded as the source of the Biblical narrative.

c) The story of the *tree of life* is found in one form or another in all the religions of civilized man. The "tree of knowledge of good and evil" has latterly been paralleled with the "tree of truth" found in the Sumerian Gudea inscriptions.²² The memory of these two trees is probably based on a very ancient tradition, which may also have served the author of Genesis as a

Adapa. Jastrow (*Die Religion Babylonians und Assyrians*, p. 551) writes: "God, while as anxious as Ea to keep man from eating of the tree of life, cautions Adam against the act, whereas Ea practices a deception in order to prevent man from eating." Wardle (*Israel and Babylon*, p. 190), with all due respect to these eminent authorities, declares that "the whole tenor of the legend is against the idea that Ea deliberately deceived his favorite, Adapa, for whom he had done so much. The interpretation of Dhorme and Rogers, that the substitution of life-giving for death-dealing food was due to a change of mind by Anu, quite unanticipated by Ea, is much more plausible. If so, not the envy of Ea, but sheer 'irony,' was the cause of Adapa's misfortune."

²² P. Dhorme, "*L'Arbre de Vérité et l'Arbre de Vie*" in *La Revue Biblique*, Sér. IV, 1907, pp. 271 sqq. Gudea was "patesi" (ruler) of the city of Lagashi; he was noted as an architect and great merchant. The baked clay cylinders (now in the Louvre) on which he recorded his deeds, afford us little or no historical information, but as they are connected compositions, complete in themselves, they are of great value for the study of the Sumerian language. (Cfr. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, pp. 28 sq.)

source. But there is no reason whatever to suppose that the Sumerian-Babylonian myth influenced the Biblical account in any way.

d) The cylinder described by Dr. Friedrich Delitzsch in his much-quoted lecture on *Babel und Bibel* (1902), appears to offer a very striking parallel to the Biblical story of the Fall. However, his hypothesis was so generally rejected by experts that the author was compelled in the fifth edition of his book to add a question mark to the legend, "Description of the Fall," which he had affixed to the picture. Delitzsch's hypothesis is unacceptable for the following reasons:

a) It cannot be determined for certain whether the persons sitting to the right and left of the tree on the picture represent a man and a woman, or two men, or two women. The garb, the posture of the arms and body, and the outlines of the latter up to the head, are alike in both cases. The horn-like ornament of the one figure is no more a sure mark of masculinity than the head-band of the other is a certain indication of femininity. Other clay cylinders represent men without the horns or with the supposedly feminine head-band.

β) Both figures stretch out their hands to-

wards the tree. This need not necessarily signify that they desire, or are about to pluck, the fruit of the tree, but, as both seem to be engaged in conversation, may be intended as a mere gesture. But even if the outstretched hands were meant to indicate that the two figures were reaching out for the fruit, the simultaneous picking of the fruit by both is contrary to the Biblical account, according to which Eve alone took fruit from the tree, ate, and then gave some of it to Adam. Nor can the picture refer to the seduction of Eve, as told in Genesis, because both figures are equally engaged, and the one believed to be the woman turns its back to the serpent. Nor can it be an illustration of the seduction of the man by the woman, since if this were the case, the latter would have to be depicted as handing the fruit to the former.

γ) Both figures are fully clothed, and hence the Babylonian illustration lacks a characteristic trait of the Biblical narrative, which expressly declares that our First Parents were not aware that they were naked until they had lost their primitive innocence.

δ) Some scholars doubt whether the tortuous line on the left side of the picture was really intended to represent a serpent: it may be merely

an ornamental filling up of the design. But even if it were meant to be a serpent, this would not prove that the serpent was conceived as the seducer, since it is depicted also on other pictures where it evidently does not play this rôle, and its position behind the back of the woman on this picture offers no reason for assuming that the sense is different here.²³

ε) The interpretation of the picture as an illustration of the Fall has no support in Babylonian mythology, which contains no pictorial or cuneiform references to the sin of our First Parents. Therefore this cylinder, over which so much printer's ink has been spilled, seems to have no immediate relation to the Biblical account of the Fall, but is probably nothing more than a somewhat divergent illustration of a frequently recurring motif in Babylonian and Assyrian art, namely, the watch kept over the tree of life.

²³ Dr. Wardle thinks that Delitzsch is right in viewing the tortuous line as a serpent, but says: "When we reflect that, in the first place, the horned figure is indubitably a god, secondly, that there is absolutely no warrant for stating that the other figure is a woman—it much more probably also represents a divinity—and thirdly, that both figures are seated and *clothed*, looking at the tree, with the serpent *behind* the figure said to represent the woman, what likeness to the Biblical story is left?" (*Israel and Babylon*, p. 187).

3. The Deluge

Stories of the Flood are met with in every part of the world. More than sixty different versions have been collected. Of these the Babylonian resembles the account given in Genesis more closely than any other.

Aside from the report of the priest Berossus (about 300 B. C.), which we possess only in scattered fragments quoted by ancient authors,²⁴ the Babylonian account of the Deluge has come down to us in four different, but more or less similar cuneiform recensions. Of three of these,

²⁴ The version of Berossus records that after the death of Ardates, his son Xisouthros reigned 64,800 years. The god Kronos (Bel) appeared to him, warned him of a coming deluge, and bade him inter at Sippar a written account of "the beginning, middle, and end of all things," build a boat for himself, his relatives and friends, birds and beasts. The flood comes, but ceases on the third day, and Xisouthros lets certain of the birds fly. They find no foothold and return. A second time he sends forth birds, and again they return, but this time with clay adhering to their feet. A third time he sends out birds, and this time they do not return. Xisouthros, ascertaining that the vessel has grounded on a mountain, emerges with his wife and daughter and the pilot, erects an altar, and offers sacrifice. Then he vanishes from sight with his three companions. A voice from heaven informs those left aboard the ship that Xisouthros, because of his piety, has gone to dwell with the gods and bids them return to Babylon and recover the writings which had been interred at Sippar. (Cfr. Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, pp. 209 sq.)

which are extremely valuable on account of their antiquity (about 3,000 B. C.) and detail, we have only a few short fragments. The fourth version, which forms part and parcel of the Gilgamesh epic (700 B. C.), tells the story of the Flood substantially as follows: King Gilgamesh, fearing death and eager to obtain immortality, engaged in a series of perilous adventures. He crossed deserts, mountains, and oceans to seek out his ancestor Uta-Napishtim, who alone had escaped death and now enjoyed a happy existence on the island of the blessed. Gilgamesh, upon meeting Uta-Napishtim, asks him: "How did you step before the council of the gods to view the life?" Uta-Napishtim replies by telling him the story of the great flood and how, having escaped death, he reached the land of immortality and peace. Shurippak, a city on the Euphrates River, he says, was already ancient when the great god decided to destroy men by a flood. Ea, who had taken part in the council, warns Uta-Napishtim and instructs him to build a ship to save himself and the seeds of all kinds of life. Uta-Napishtim builds the ship and conducts into it his family, his dependents, artisans and domestics, as well as many wild animals, after which he himself enters and shuts the door. A terrible thunder storm ensued, which lasted six days and six

ights, and was so violent that "even the gods were terrified and ascended to Anu's heaven, where they crouched along the wall and ducked themselves like dogs." When, on the seventh day, the flood began to subside, Uta-Napishtim opened a port-hole and saw that the vessel was drifting towards Mount Nisir. There it landed and was detained for six days. On the seventh day Uta-Napishtim sent forth a dove and a swallow, which, finding no resting-place for their feet, returned to the ark. Then he dispatched a raven, which did not come back. On leaving the ship, Uta-Napishtim offered sacrifice to the gods, who "smelled the savory odor and gathered like flies over the burnt-offering." When Ellil saw the ship and its inmates, he was angry, because not all men had perished. Ea tried to assuage his anger, led Uta-Napishtim and his wife ashore, blessed them, and received them among the gods with the words:

Formerly Uta-Napishtim was an ordinary mortal,
Now Uta-Napishtim and his wife shall be like unto us
gods!

Uta-Napishtim shall live far off at the mouth of the
rivers." ²⁵

²⁵ This deluge story forms the eleventh of the twelve tablets which contain the Gilgamesh epic. The text was found in the Ashurbanipal archives, but was copied from considerably older originals. Wardle thinks it is "obviously an independent tradi-

It would be folly to deny the resemblances between this Babylonian legend and the Biblical narrative of the Flood. But there are even more striking divergences, which show that the Biblical cannot have been derived from the Babylonian account. We will mention only a few. The Biblical account rests on a purely Monotheistic basis, whereas the Babylonian is frankly Polytheistic. The Bible describes the Deluge as a punishment for the sins of mankind, whereas the Babylonian legend traces it to an arbitrary whim of the gods, who were determined to destroy the human race without a perceptible cause. The rainbow as a divine guaranty of peace is

tion which has been most ingeniously worked into the epic (*Israel and Babylon*, p. 210). Exactly how old this legend is cannot be determined; but Sir Wallis Budge holds that it was in existence before the Sumerians overcame the aboriginal inhabitants of Lower Mesopotamia. The Sumerian scribes treated the old indigenous legend in one way, the Babylonians in another, and the Hebrews in yet another, and it is pretty clear that variant versions of it existed among the Sumerians and Babylonians in the third millennium B. C. Scheil has published (*Recueil de Travaux* Vol. XX, pp. 35 sqq.) the text of a part of a Babylonian version from a tablet dating from the reign of Hammurapi, and Poeb has edited and translated (*Historical and Grammatical Texts*, Philadelphia, 1914) a portion of a Sumerian version which was written in the reign of Ammisaduga, about 2,000 B. C. The scribes who wrote these texts did not invent the legend of the Flood, as they must have had archetypes to copy, and how old these were no man can say. (E. A. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, pp. 86 sq.)

absent from the Babylonian account. In regard to the duration of the Flood and the persons and localities concerned in the catastrophe, there is no agreement at all between "Bible and Babel."

The existing resemblances can be sufficiently explained on the hypothesis that the details of the Flood were recorded soon after the event and that the Scriptural story is a parallel and independent form of a common tradition.

In 1909 the late Professor H. V. Hilprecht discovered a fragment of another Babylonian Flood story at Nippur. This account was probably written about the year 1,000 B. C., and is some 1,400 years older than the recension contained in the Gilgamesh epic. It shows even greater resemblance to the Biblical story. The chief points of likeness are the following:

a) The instructions given to the Babylonian Noe, so far as preserved, agree with those of Gen. VI, 14-16.

b) In the description of the ark, the "height" is mentioned last, as in Gen. VI, 15.

c) The directions for the construction of the roof in the Nippur version are soberly objective, as in Gen. VI, 16, in contradistinction to the hyperbolic terms employed in other Babylonian recensions of the Flood story.

d) The Nippur version alone among all the

Babylonian accounts of the Flood contains the characteristic term *mîn* (= species, genus) found in Gen. VI, 20, and translated in our English version by "kind."

e) The "fowls" of Gen. VI, 20, are not mentioned in any of the Babylonian cuneiform recensions with the sole exception of the Nippur version.²⁶

In view of these resemblances it may be admitted as a possibility that the Scriptural account of the Flood, considered as a literary document, is dependent upon the Nippur version. In that case it would furnish a new and important argument for the great antiquity of the Scriptural account of the Flood, which Rationalistic critics have assigned to the seventh century B. C. But since this newly discovered recension of the Babylonian story of the Flood is extremely fragmentary—we have only thirteen lines, of which not a single one is complete—no definitive conclusion can be drawn with regard to the mutual relation of the two reports.

²⁶ H. V. Hilprecht, *Der neue Fund zur Sintflutgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1910, p. 53; Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, p. 205; transliteration and translation by R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, pp. 108 sq.; A. F. Clay, *A Hebrew Deluge Story in Cuneiform*, pp. 81 sq.

²⁷ Dr. Wardle (*Israel and Babylon*, pp. 216-218) draws a detailed parallel between the leading features of the Hebrew and

4. The Monotheism of Babylonia

It has been known since 1880 that about 2,500 B. C. a Semitic tribe, related to the Chanaanites, migrated from Southern Arabia and settled in Babylonia, which had up to that time been inhabited by non-Semitic peoples (Sumerians and Akkadians). Of these Semitic immigrants, F. Hommel asserted, as early as 1897,²⁸ that they brought with them to Babylonia a religion which, in its essential elements, must be regarded as Monotheistic. This hypothesis was mainly based upon certain hymns and prayers addressed to the moon-god.

Babylonian traditions of the Flood, and says that while, from a purely literary point of view, the Biblical account is inferior to the Gilgamesh version, the striking resemblances between the two "must not blind us to the even more salient divergences. The most important of these consists in the extremely different views of the deity. The cuneiform accounts are frankly polytheistic, and, even so, give no very elevated picture of the gods. The latter are terrified, crouching like dogs in dismay at the consequences of their own handiwork. They gather like flies about the sacrifice. They suffer from divided counsel, and intrigue one against another. . . . Even Ea, who appears in his usual rôle as the friend of man, protesting that punishment should fall only upon the guilty, acts very disingenuously, and advises Uta-Napishtim to tell lies in explanation of the boat-building. This criticism applies even more to the advice given by Kronos in the Berossus account. What a wide gulf between all this and the majestic and ethical conception of God in Genesis!" (*Op. cit.*, p. 218 sq.)

²⁸ *Die altisraelitische Ueberlieferung in inschriftlicher Beleuchtung*, Münster, 1897, p. 117.

Delitzsch, basing his deductions on the signification of the word *ilu* and of certain proper names compounded of *ilu* and *Yahweh*, maintained that the ancient Semitic tribes which settled in Babylonia about 2,500 B.C. "regarded the divine essence as an undivided unit."²⁹

The name *ilu* (Hebrew *el*), according to Delitzsch, signifies "goal." "As the Sumerians pictured their gods as residing 'high up' in the direction in which the human vision travels, that is, in and above the firmament, and as we ourselves use the figurative expression 'heaven' for God, . . . so the most ancient Semites called the 'divine' Being which they conceived as dwelling in heaven and governing heaven and earth, *il* or *el*, *i. e.*, that towards which their eyes were directed. 'Target of the eye,' like the sun and heaven, is in my opinion the first and original meaning of the word. . . . Quite naturally and by sheer necessity it happened that man, who first sought the divinity up there with his eyes, soon sought it also with his hands and with his heart."³⁰

A further argument is derived from the personal names formed by means of the root syllable

²⁹ *Babel und Bibel*, 2nd ed., Leipsic, 1903, p. 46. Cfr. Vol. I of this *Handbook*, p. 221.

³⁰ Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 72 sq.

ilu, such as, for instance, *Ilu-amranni* ("God, look at me"), *Ilu-tûram* ("God, turn back to us"), *Ilu-amtahar* ("I invoked God"), *Ilu-abi* ("God is my father"), *Iarbi-ilu* ("God is great"), *Jamlik-ilu* ("God rules, reigns"), *Ibši-ina-ili* ("through God he came into existence"), *Avêl-ilu* ("servant of God"), *Mut-ilu* ("man of God"), *Ilu-ma-le'i* ("God is powerful"), *Ilû-abi* ("God is my father"), *Ilûma-ilu* ("God is God"), and so forth. "An unprejudiced and unaffected consideration of all these and other names of the time of Hammurapi," says Delitzsch, "leads . . . to the conclusion that they are rooted in a religious conception of things which differed from the Polytheistic religion of Babylonia. The nature and value of this Monotheism cannot be determined from the sources at present available, but can be concluded only from the later development of 'Yahvism.' " ³¹

Our opponents finally cite three proper names of the time of Hammurapi, which are said to contain Yahweh as a constituent element. Delitzsch read these names as follows: *Ja-a'-ve-ilu*, *Ja-ve-ilu*, *Ja-ú-um-ilu*, and interprets each one of them as meaning, "Yahweh is God." "Therefore," he adds, "Yahweh, He who is, He who,

³¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. (46), 72 sq.

far beyond all change, . . . lives and works in the brilliant tent of the stars, which is subject to eternal laws, this name Yahweh was the spiritual possession of the same nomad tribes out of which after a thousand years the children of Israel were to emerge." ³²

Concerning this theory we wish to say that the signification attributed by Delitzsch to the word *ilu* (goal) cannot be used as the point of departure for an argument in favor of the existence of Monotheism among the ancient Babylonians. For this interpretation is by no means certain,³³ and, on the other hand, the choice of such a term to express the idea of God could be expected only from philosophically trained nations, to which class the Assyrians and Babylonians did not belong. Professor Delitzsch later modified his theory by saying that *ilu* is primarily the goal of the eyes and only secondarily the goal of the hands and the heart; but this does not strengthen the case for the alleged

³² *Op. cit.*, p. 47; cfr. pp. 73 sqq.

³³ Delitzsch's readings, to which Sayce had called attention some years earlier, were asserted to be false, not only by conservative scholars like König, but also by some noted Assyriologists, such as Bezold and Daiches. Wardle thinks that "most scholars would now grant that the divine name Yahweh was current in early times beyond the borders of Israel," but emphasizes that "we should hesitate to build any argument upon etymological bases of this kind." (*Israel and Babylon*, p. 250).

Monotheism of the ancient Babylonians, for to the pagan, too, his fetish is the goal of his eyes, and, broadly speaking, every visible object may be designated as a goal of the eyes.

b) From the personal names which contain the stem *ilu* it does not follow that *ilu* is the proper name of the one and only Supreme Being. All that can be legitimately deduced therefrom is that he who coined these names, as is proved, *e. g.*, by the phrase Samsu-iluna ("the sun-god is our god", which was current in the days of Hammurapi), knew the appellative "God." How the word "ilu" is to be interpreted in each individual combination, whether as a common or a proper name, cannot always be determined with certainty. Some of the above-quoted names, for instance, *ilu-abi* ("one god is my father"), *ibši-ina-ili* ("through one god I came into being"), *ilûma-ilu* ("one god is one god"), admit of the appellative meaning of "one" god. Others, like *ilu-amranni* ("God, look at me"), *ilu-tûram* ("God, turn back to us"), because of the direct invocation of the divine person, require that the syllable "ilu" be interpreted as the proper name of the deity. But even these last-mentioned examples are not sufficient proof that the respective names are based upon the Monotheistic concept of God. It

is possible that "ilu" simply means one of the universally worshipped gods, *e. g.*, Ellil or Ea; nay, this assumption is rendered probable by the consideration that a nation given to Polytheism always uses the term "god" to designate a definite deity, to which it gives a certain exterior worship.

c) Competent scholars regard Delitzsch's proposed interpretation of the three proper names composed of "Yahweh" and "ilu" as possible, but in view of the ambiguity of the Assyro-Babylonian cuneiform characters, hold several other readings to be at least equally probable. Hence, the assertion that a deity with a name resembling the Hebrew "Yahweh" was known in nearer Asia at the time of King Hammurapi can claim only a certain degree of probability. That this deity cannot be identified with the God of the Jewish Covenant, is evident from the absolute contrariety existing between the Israelitic idea of God and that current among their neighbors, especially the Chanaanites.

But even if we were to concede, for the sake of argument, that the name "Yahweh" was used in Babylonia a thousand years before the time of Moses, the only conclusion that could logically be drawn from this fact would be that the

God of Israel did not introduce a new name when He declared,³⁴ "I am who am," but merely attributed to Himself a known name, to which He attached a new and special meaning.

To support his view of the Babylonian provenience of Israelitic Monotheism, Dr. Delitzsch speaks of Monotheistic currents within the Polytheistic State religion of Babylon. "In spite of the fact," he says, "that free and enlightened thinkers openly taught that Nergal and Nebo, the moon-god and the sun-god, the thunder-god Ramman, and all other gods were one in Marduk, the god of light, a crass Polytheism remained the official religion of Babylonia for three thousand years."³⁵ As proof for this assertion he quotes a neo-Babylonian cuneiform tablet, discovered in 1895, in which, as he claims, "all (or at least the main) deities of the Babylonian pantheon are designated as one with and in the god Marduk,"—showing that the names Ninib, Nergal, Sin, etc., are merely different appellations for Marduk.³⁶

³⁴ Ex. III, 14.

³⁵ Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 78. Marduk had no less than fifty names bestowed upon him by the gods in council to indicate that the power and wisdom of every god were collected in him. (Cfr. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, p. 85.) "At a comparatively late period," says this learned Assyriologist (*op. cit.*, pp. 101 sq.), "the

The text to which he refers reads as follows:

"Ninib-Marduk ša alli (Ninib-Marduk of the power)

Nêrgal-Marduk ša káblu (Nergal-Marduk of the combat)

Zamana-Marduk ša taḥazi (Zamana-Marduk of the battle)

Bêl-Marduk ša bêlûtu u mitluktu (Bel-Marduk of dominion)

Nabû-Marduk ša nikasi (Nabu-Marduk of business [?])

Sin-Marduk munammir mûši (Sin-Marduk, illuminator of the night)

Šamaš-Marduk ša kênâti (Shamash-Marduk, god of right)

Addu-Marduk ša zunnu (Addu-Marduk of rain)."

Delitzsch's interpretation of this inscription may be correct; but it is equally possible that the collocation of the different deities with

powers and attributes of all the gods were assigned to Marduk, the son of Ea, and some have thought in consequence that the Babylonians were Monotheist, but such was not the case. The Monotheism of the Babylonians and Assyrians (for the national god Ashur was in Assyria what Marduk was in Babylonia) entirely lack the sublime, spiritual conception of God that the Israelites possessed, and was wholly different from the Monotheism of Christian nations."

Marduk was made for the purpose of raising the latter above all the others, and that the Babylonians, without wishing to deny the existence of the other gods, attributed to Marduk the sum-total of those perfections and powers which were believed to exist separately in the others. The latter interpretation squares neatly with the text and falls naturally within the Polytheistic religious views of the Babylonians, whereas Delitzsch's interpretation is diametrically opposed to their acknowledged Polytheism, and the author is unable to justify this radical departure from the known facts by any convincing argument.

But even if the Monotheism of Israel could be proved to be of Babylonian origin, the fact would merely furnish another valuable confirmation for the thesis we have demonstrated in the first volume of this *Handbook*, namely, that Monotheism was the primitive religion of all mankind. The Monotheism of Israel in its purity would be absolutely inexplicable from the natural point of view. The greatness of the Jewish religion does not consist in this that the Israelites were the only Monotheists at the beginning of their religious development, but rather in the fact that they alone, among all the nations of antiquity, preserved the primitive

faith in one God pure and unadulterated for more than two thousand years and worshipped Him without images, in spite of their strong inclination to adapt themselves to the Polytheistic beliefs and practices of their neighbors round about.

“If we think of Yahweh as an epithet, from an ancient Semitic root whose meaning is quite uncertain,” says Dr. Landsdell Wardle, “we find no difficulty in supposing that in different places men speaking Semitic tongues may have called the god whom they worshipped by that name. This is, however, very far from saying that they worshipped the same god. The really vital matter is not primarily what men call their god, but what character they attribute to him. Even if it be true that the name Yahweh was known to the Hebrews in pre-Mosaic times, the great leader [Moses, who was instructed to say to the Hebrews: The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you] certainly filled the name with a new content for his people. There is not the least reason to suppose that the name came to Israel from Babylon. Indeed it is a striking fact that most, if not all, the names found in Babylonian documents which are supposed to contain this divine name are the names of immigrants to that country. So that, if we are to assume borrowing

at all in this case, Babylon is not the creditor, but the debtor.”⁸⁷

5. The Laws of Babylonia

When dealing with the religion of the Old Testament, we noted certain points of contact between the Mosaic law and the legislation of the Babylonians and other Oriental nations, and showed how Catholic theologians view this fact. Hence, we can here content ourselves with adding a few observations for the sake of completeness.

When there is question of pagan parallels to the legislation of the Old Testament, we have in mind mainly the civil laws promulgated by Moses, the Decalogue, the sanctification of the Sabbath, the hygienic precepts, and the laws regulating divine worship.

The famous Code of Hammurapi, found at Susa in Persia by French excavators in 1901-1902, is inscribed upon a tapering stela of black diorite nearly eight feet high. The stela had been broken into three pieces, which fortunately had suffered little damage and were easily fitted together. The Code was compiled towards the

⁸⁷ *Israel and Babylon*, p. 251. We must remember, too, that according to Gen. IV, 26, men began to use the name Yahweh in worship in the time of Seth.

end of Hammurapi's reign, *ca.* 2030 B. C. When complete, it contained, according to the estimate of Mr. C. W. H. Johns,³⁸ approximately 8,000 words. The Code is a collection of ancient Babylonian laws, some of which show remarkable resemblances to the civil laws of Israel, as contained especially in chapters XXI to XXIII of the Book of Exodus.³⁹

It is asserted that the Code of Hammurapi duplicates all the precepts of the Decalogue with

³⁸ *The Oldest Code of Laws in the World*, Edinburgh, 1911.

³⁹ That the stela was found at Susa in Persia is attributed to the fact that it had been carried off as a booty of war by some Elamite conqueror of Babylon. The text of the Code was first published by Father V. Scheil, under the title, *Code des Lois de Hammourabi*, Paris, 1902, followed by a commentary by the same learned scholar, *La Loi de Hammourabi*, Paris, 1906. Part of the text has been polished off, leaving a smooth surface, on which the conqueror probably intended to inscribe his own name and the story of his triumph; but as the intention was never carried out, we are left to conjecture when and by whom the stela was removed from Babylon. Wardle (*Israel and Babylon*, p. 253) thinks it may possibly have been taken by Shutruknahunde, about 1100 B. C. For a transliteration and translation of the cuneiform text of the Code of Hammurapi (this is the form of the name which Assyriologists now mostly prefer; Budge writes Khammurabi; see the discussion in A. T. Clay, *The Empire of the Amorites*) cfr. R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, pp. 398-465; C. W. H. Johns, *The Oldest Code of Laws in the World*, Edinburgh, 1911; P. S. P. Handcock, *The Code of Hammurabi*, London, 1910. Large extracts in English translation in E. A. Wallis Budge, *Babylonian Life and History*, pp. 124-130; H. Winkler, *Die Gesetze Hammurabis in Umschrift und Uebersetzung*, Leipsic, 1904.

the exception of the second, and possibly the third.⁴⁰ The *Sabbath*, according to Delitzsch, did not originate with the Jews, but among the ancient inhabitants of the region lying between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Both the name (*šabattu* or *šapatta*) and the object itself are found in ancient Babylonia, where the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth day of each month were observed in a special manner as days of rest, penance, and reconciliation.⁴¹

Circumcision, it is said, was not only found among the Israelites, but was widely spread throughout the Orient as a rite connected with the attainment of puberty. In Egypt it was in vogue before the time of Abraham, on whom it was imposed by Yahweh as a sign of the sacred covenant for his descendants.⁴²

Laws concerning *ritual cleanness* were in force among many other nations besides the Jews. Certain animals, foods, and conditions were quite generally regarded as "clean," while others were looked upon as "unclean."⁴³

The *sacrificial rites* of the Egyptians and

⁴⁰ A. Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East*, Vol. II, p. 107.

⁴¹ Delitzsch, *Babel und Bibel*, pp. 40 sq.; 6th ed., p. 31.

⁴² Gen. XVII, 10. Cfr. A. Bertholet, *The History of Hebrew Civilization*, tr. by A. K. Dallas, New York, 1926, pp. 112, 162.

⁴³ Cfr. A. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 117.

Babylonians are also said to show certain analogies with the corresponding precepts of the Pentateuch. The Hebrew and Babylonian languages have in common certain sacrificial terms like *kirbannu* (sacrificial gift), *zibu* (sacrifice), *kuppuru* (to atone), and *tabahu* (to slaughter). Scattered Minaic inscriptions have preserved for us the terms *lewi'u* (priest) and *lewi'at* (levite). In regard to the sacrificial material, too, there are many analogies. The Biblical "loaves of proposition" have their counterpart in the twelve or thirty-six loaves which the Babylonians offered to their gods and which had to be made of pure sweet flour. The sacrificial animals of Babylonia are for the most part identical with those of Israel.⁴⁴ Priestly vestments were known also in Egypt.⁴⁵

a) The Babylonian parallels to the civil laws of Moses and Decalogue have already been dealt with above, and we shall add but one brief remark to what we have said concerning them. The undeniable similarity between the laws of Moses on the one hand, and those of Hammurapi and other pagan legislators on the other, find their explanation in the wide ex-

⁴⁴ Jeremias, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 114 sqq.

⁴⁵ V. Zapletal, O. P., *Alttestamentliches*, Freiburg, 1903, pp. 55 sq.

tension of Babylonian culture, which powerfully influenced the habits and customs of the nations of Asia, to which the Israelites were related. But the ancient laws were ennobled, broadened, and filled with a new spirit through their being brought into intimate connection with the Monotheism of the Jews.

b) The Babylonian *šabattu* is not synonymous with the Hebrew Sabbath. *Šabattu* is the day on which the hearts (of the gods) are propitiated, a day of penance and reconciliation, whereas the Hebrew Sabbath is a day of recreation and innocent enjoyment. "We do not know how this *šabattu* was celebrated; we do not even know whether it was celebrated once a year, like the Hebrew Day of Atonement, or repeatedly. It is usually assumed that . . . the seventh, etc., day of the month was called *šabattu*. Whether this assumption is justified, is a question that cannot be definitely decided at the present stage of our knowledge of the cultural life of Assyria."⁴⁶ Hence the only thing that re-

⁴⁶ P. Keil, *Zur Babel- und Bibelfrage*, Treves, 1903, p. 41. Warde says (*Israel and Babylon*, pp. 244, 247-48): "In a syllabary, that is, a document explaining difficult words, was found the equation *um nuh libbi* = *šapattum*. The meaning of the words on the left side of the equation is literally 'day of rest of the heart.' So it was thought that here was a proof of the Sabbath as a rest day. But from the penitential psalms it is clear that the real meaning of the

mains as distinctively Babylonian is the period of seven phases, which was probably based upon the changes of the moon. If the seven days of the Jewish week were derived from Babylonia,

words is 'day when the heart [of the god] is propitiated.' A tablet discovered by Pinches showed that the *shapattum* was the fifteenth day of the month. The passage in the astronomical poem of *enuma elish* which deals with the motions of the moon quite clearly establishes the fact that the *shapattum* is the day of the full moon. Since the verb *shabatu* is explained elsewhere as an equivalent of *gamaru*, meaning to be 'complete,' 'full,' there can be little hesitation in saying that the fifteenth day of the month [the Babylonians reckoned by means of the lunar year] was treated in Babylonia as the full moon day, and received the name *shapattum* because that was the day when the moon was a complete circle. . . . It seems probable on the whole, that the Sabbath goes back in Israel to the earliest times, and that it was connected with the changes of the moon. Whether it was originally only the day of the full moon, or whether the half-moon days were also Sabbaths, is difficult to decide. If the former view be taken, it seems reasonable to believe that the word Sabbath is connected with the Babylonian *shapattum*, which may, indeed, be true on the other supposition also. To grant that the two peoples employed a common name for the two things by no means justifies the contention of Delitzsch that Israel owed its Sabbath to Babylonia. Such days are entirely transformed by the religion of the people among whom they are celebrated, and even where they start from a common origin, develop utterly distinct characteristics. At present no evidence has been produced to show that the Babylonians had any real equivalent of the Hebrew Sabbath. Indeed, if there had been any good foundation for such a theory, it is extremely difficult to understand why, after the Exile, so much importance was attached to the Sabbath as a mark of distinction between the Jews and other peoples. Another difficulty in the way of accepting the theory lies in the fact that the Babylonians had throughout their history a five-day, not a seven-day, week."

there were about it features which were entirely new, namely, the independence of the Jewish Sabbath from the phases of the moon, its character as a day of rest and joy, and as a day for commemorating the perfectioning of the created world by its Maker and the liberation of the Chosen People from the servitude of Egypt.⁴⁷

c) *Circumcision*, which among other nations, was a hygienic measure, became for the Israelites, by special divine command, a sign of the covenant which God had made with His Chosen People, and thus received a supernatural significance.⁴⁸

d) The *similarity between Jewish and pagan precepts* regarding cleanness and the sacrificial rite merely prove how intimately the Israelites associated with their neighbors. The agreement in cultic terms must evidently be traced to the close relationship between the respective lan-

⁴⁷ On the question of the origin of the Sabbath see W. L. Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, pp. 236-248, where the theory of Meinhold (*Sabbat und Woche im Alten Testament*, 1905) is briefly summarized and refuted; cfr. also J. Hehn, *Der israelitische Sabbath*, 1909; IDEM, *Siebenzahl und Sabbath bei den Babyloniern*, 1907.

⁴⁸ It is not by any means certain that circumcision was common among the ethnic nations of antiquity; no less an authority than Sir Wallis Budge says (*Babylonian Life and History*, p. 165) that "the reliefs on the monuments make it certain that circumcision was not practised."

guages. The Minaic terms *lewi'u* and *lewi'at* do not prove that the Israelitic title "levite" is derived from the Minæans rather than from their own tribal name Levi. For since the age of the Minæic inscriptions cannot be definitely determined, it is possible that the cultic terms which they contain are derived from those of the Israelites. The similarities in regard to the sacrificial victim and the priestly vestments are based on the ancient Semitic civilization, common alike to Jews, Babylonians, and Egyptians. Providence took the existing elements of Monotheistic worship, adapted them in a special manner to the cultus of the Jews, and so raised it to a higher level.

6. The Babylonian and Persian Doctrine of the Angels

The Israelitic belief in angels is sometimes said to have been borrowed from Babylonian and Persian mythology. One of the arguments adduced in proof of this assertion is that, after the Babylonian Captivity, angelology appears to be more highly developed in the sacred writings of the Old Testament than before. Certain names (among them "Asmodeus," derived from a Per-

sian deity),⁴⁹ were now attributed to the angels, and the "Cherubim" of the Bible had their prototype in the colossal figures of bulls or lions with human heads and eagle wings found at the entrance of Assyrian temples and in the winged patronal deities charged with watching over the "sacred tree." Delitzsch does not hesitate to assert that the messengers of the deity, the angels, who were unknown to the Egyptians, are of Babylonian origin, and that particularly the notion of the Cherubim and Seraphim and of the guardian angels who accompany men, can be traced to Babylonia."⁵⁰

a) That the Israelitic belief in angels is more marked in the literature of the Old Testament after than before the Exile, only proves that this element of the Jewish religion, too, was drawn into the process of gradual development which characterizes the religious thought and life of the ancient Hebrews. The belief in angels, which was known to the Patriarchs, the ancestors of the Hebrew nation, cannot have been derived from Babylonia, for it is incompatible with the Polytheistic views entertained by the Babylonians at that time. The

⁴⁹ Cfr. Tob. III, 8.

⁵⁰ *Babel und Bibel*, 6th ed., p. 43.

angels of the Old Testament are created spirits who serve the one true God, whereas the planetary spirits of the Babylonians and the *Ameša Spentas* (Amshaspands) of the Persians, which are said to be their prototypes, are conceived as real deities.

b) The Biblical *Cherubim* are said to derive their name, office, and manner of representation from Babylon. "Cherub" is identified with *kirûbu*, a term used to designate the winged bull-gods of the Babylonians. But neither of these contentions can be proved.⁵¹ Nor does the further assertion that the word "cherub" is not derived from a Jewish root, but comes from the Assyrian "karûbu," which means condescending, powerful, great, give us any real information, since it is a mere conjecture, and the possibility always remains that the word "cherub" is independent of the Assyrian "karûbu" and together with the latter is derived from some common Semitic root.

The case is similar with regard to the office of the Cherubim. Up to the present time it has not been possible to establish with certainty the peculiar office of either the Scriptural Cherubim or the Babylonian or Assyrian gods depicted in the form of bulls and lions, and consequently to

⁵¹ P. Keil, *Zur Babel- und Bibelfrage*, pp. 35 sq.

derive that office from Assyria and Babylonia is nothing more than an unproved assumption.⁵²

We do not even know how the Hebrews pictorially represented the Cherubim. The vision of the Prophet Ezechiel,⁵³ which took place in Babylonia, may have been influenced by ideas traceable to the bull and lion gods of that nation. It is possible, too, that the sight of Babylonian or Assyrian sculptures may have inspired Hebrew artists to produce similar creations. But all this would only prove that the manner of depicting the angels was of Babylonian provenience; it would demonstrate nothing with regard to the origin of the belief in their existence. It is in this sense that we must judge the use of the Persian name "Asmodeus" (Asmodi) in the Book of Tobias. The sacred writer took the linguistic form, but not the underlying idea from pagan sources.⁵⁴

⁵² Keil, *op. cit.*, pp. 34 sq.

⁵³ Ez. I and X.

⁵⁴ Fr. Hugh Pope, O.P., thinks that the belief in angels, or spirits intermediate between God and man, is a characteristic of all Semitic nations. He quotes Sayce (*The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, London, 1901) as identifying the Babylonian *sukallin* with angels, but justly remarks that as the Babylonian accounts of the Creation and the Flood "do not contrast very favorably with the Biblical accounts," so, too, the contrast between the "chaotic hierarchies of gods and angels which modern research has revealed" and the angels of the Holy Book is very great,

2. New Testament Parallels in the History of Religions

So-called parallels to the revealed religion of the New Testament are drawn from widely different religious and philosophical systems. They refer partly to historical facts, partly to dogmas, and partly to ritual precepts, more especially to the dogmas of the Divine Trinity and the Redemption, the Incarnation, the principal events of Christ's earthly life, particularly His death

and "perhaps we are justified in seeing in all forms of religion vestiges of a primitive nature-worship which has at times succeeded in debasing the purer revelation, and which, where that primitive revelation has not received successive increments as among the Hebrews, results in an abundant crop of weeds." On the attempts to trace a connection between the angels of the Bible and the *amesha spentas* of the Zend-Avesta, the same writer says: "That the Persian domination and the Babylonian Captivity exerted a large influence upon the Hebrew conception of the angels is acknowledged in the Talmud of Jerusalem (Rosh Haschanna, 56), where it is said that the names of the angels were introduced from Babylon. It is, however, by no means clear that the angelic beings who figure so largely in the pages of the Avesta, are to be referred to the older Persian religion of the time of Cyrus and not rather to the Neo-Zoroastrianism of the Sasanides. If this be the case, as Darmsteter holds, we should rather reverse the position and attribute the Zoroastrian angels to the influence of the Bible and of Philo." (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, pp. 480 sq.) See the detailed study of these questions by Joseph Plessis, "Babylon et la Bible," in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Supplement. Vol. I, pp. 714-851 (Paris, 1928), with all the latest literature on the subject.

and Resurrection, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

1. The Dogma of the Trinity

The Christian dogma of the Trinity is said to be of pagan origin because many ethnic religions of antiquity regarded the figure three as sacred and connected it with the essence of the Godhead as principle of division. A number of nations are said to have believed in the Trinity in a more or less explicit form. The Egyptians, for instance, worshipped Amon, Ra, and Ptah, or Amon, Ptah, and Osiris, who were represented by three human heads placed above the abstract symbol of the deity. Among the Babylonians we meet with several triads: Ea, Marduk, and Nebo; Anu, Enlil, and Ea; Sin, Ur, and Harran. Among the Hindus, Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar, etc., Brahma, Višnu, and Çiva are depicted under the image of one body with three heads. Chinese Taôism distinguishes three principles in the divine essence, namely, the nameless super-being, the name and revelation of the super-being, and the spirit which emanates from, yet forever remains in, God. The three Platonic principles: the demiurge, the world of ideas, and the oversoul of the universe,

also are a sort of counterpart to the Christian Trinity.⁵⁵

It may be admitted that these pagan triads show a certain external resemblance to the Divine Trinity of Christian revelation, but this resemblance is purely external.

a) Christian theology believes just as firmly in the unity of the Divine Essence as in the real distinction between the three Divine Persons.⁵⁶ The pagan idea, on the other hand, sacrifices either the distinction of persons or the unity of nature. Thus the Egyptian trinity is merely the expression of three distinct powers, properties, or effects of the deity. Amon is the invisible power, Ptah the truth, and Osiris the benevolence of the Creator. In India, Brahma is the creator, Višnu the preserver, and Çiva the destroyer of the world. Of the Taôistic trinity nothing definite can be said, as the doctrine is too obscure. The pagan nations who believed in a real trinity of divine persons, lost the idea of the unity of the divine essence. This is the case

⁵⁵ Cfr. C. Clemen, *Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Neuen Testaments*, Giessen, 1909, pp. 158 sqq.; P. Schanz, *Apologie des Christentums*, Vol. II, 3rd ed., pp. 79 sq.; 154 sqq.; 176 sq.; O. Willmann, *Geschichte des Idealismus*, Vol. II, 2nd ed., Braunschweig, 1907, pp. 156 sqq.; J. Lebreton, *Les Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, Paris, 1910 (recently republished as Vol. I of *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité*, 6th ed., Paris, 1927.)

⁵⁶ Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *The Divine Trinity*, pp. 253 sqq.

with the Babylonians, and also with Plato, whose three principles are really as many distinct and separate gods.

b) The one God in three Persons, in whom Christianity believes, creates beings different from Himself, but He is not drawn into the process of the world's evolution, but remains immutable, always the same, in the possession of the infinite perfections which are His from all eternity. In diametrical opposition to this doctrine, theogony and cosmogony largely coincide in the Trinitarian notions of the pagans, and the divine being is thus made to pass through various stages of development. This is the case in the Pantheistic religion of the Hindus, in the theological teaching of the Babylonians and Egyptians, and even Plato connects at least one member of his triad, the universal or over-soul, with matter. Hence there can be no doubt that the Christian Trinity is essentially different from the pagan triads, and, as a consequence, its substance cannot have been derived from pagan sources, though we may admit that the form, *i. e.*, the notions and terms which in course of time were employed to express it scientifically, were of pagan *provenance*. Thus the ideas of essence, substance, personality, the term *Logos*, etc., were actually borrowed from pagan

philosophy⁵⁷ and adapted to the scientific demonstration of the Christian religion. Not the Christian dogma of the Trinity as such, therefore, but only some of the elements of its formal expression were derived from paganism, or, more correctly, from the natural truths contained in pagan philosophy.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Cfr. S. Angus, *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity*, pp. 48, 106, 242, 311. Neither the Jews nor the Christians created, or could create, a new language of their own to express their religious ideas. They *necessarily* employed the terms of the language that had been shaped by pagans and polytheists, to express their religious ideas. We use *Deus*, a word the pagans had first used; for us it is a proper name, for them it was an appellative or common noun. And thus with the rest.

⁵⁸ Dr. Pohle says on this subject: "Certain Rationalists have attempted to explain the Christian dogma of the Trinity as the product of purely natural reflection on the part of pre-Christian philosophers and religionists. Having emptied it of its supernatural content, they profess to find its germs and prototypes in the philosophy of Plato and the Neo-Platonists, in Philo's doctrine of the Logos, in the writings of the legendary Mercury Trismegistus, and, lastly, in the day-dreams of Kabbalistic theosophy. But all this is rank sophistry. As a matter of fact the Christian Trinity is diametrically opposed alike to the Platonic triad (God, ideas, and world), to the Hindu triad (Brahma, Vishnu, and Çiva), and to the Chinese Tão trinity of heaven, earth, and man. Indeed, none of the so-called ethnic trinities can be shown to possess more than a purely external resemblance to the revealed Trinity of the Christian dispensation." (Pohle-Preuss, *The Divine Trinity*, p. 199). See also on this subject G. Van Noort, *De Deo Uno et Trino*, pp. 193 sqq.; E. Krebs, *Der Logos als Heiland im ersten Jahrhundert*, Freiburg i. B., 1910; J. Lebreton, *Les Origines du Dogme de la Trinité*, pp. Paris, 1910, pp. 1-207 (6th ed. 1927, pp. 1-251.) B. Bartmann, *Dogma und Religionsgeschichte*, Paderborn, 1922, pp. 16-24.

2. The Dogma of the Redemption

Christianity is essentially a religion instituted for the purpose of redeeming mankind from sin and its consequences. As the idea of redemption plays a dominant rôle also in Buddhism, that religion is often compared favorably with the Church founded by Jesus Christ. "The sole aim of Buddhism," says a learned scholar, "was to redeem [mankind] from the painful world of birth and decay."⁵⁹ Its followers believe that man is on earth to suffer. The "Four Noble Truths" which form the innermost essence of the Buddhistic creed are: (1) existence is painful; (2) pain has a cause; (3) pain can be brought to an end; (4) an eightfold path leads to the cessation of pain.⁶⁰ It is the supreme task of the faithful disciple of Buddha to rid himself of every desire, including the will to live. He who has abandoned every desire and harbors no further wish, has attained to complete beatitude, and can enter Nirvana as a perfect man.

⁵⁹ H. Oldenberg, *Buddha*, 5th ed., Stuttgart and Berlin, 1906, p. 314. (The first edition of this learned work has been translated by A. Hoey under the title, *Buddha: His Life, his Doctrine, his Order*, London: Williams & Norgate). On Buddhism in general see Vol. I of this *Handbook*, pp. 135 sq., 209, 238 sq.

⁶⁰ Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 243 sq.; E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London and New York, 1927, pp. 87, 145, 173, 193 sq.

Christianity and Buddhism resemble each other in this respect that both religions propose to redeem man and make him eternally happy. But this resemblance is purely superficial and does not extend to the innermost substance. As a matter of fact the Christian doctrine of the Redemption differs from that of Buddha in a number of essential points:

a) *In its presuppositions.* The Christian doctrine of the Redemption is based on the existence of a personal, supra-mundane God, on whom man depends and whose law he has violated by sin. Buddhism, on the contrary, is essentially atheistic, being founded upon the doctrine of palingenesis and the transmigration of souls, and paying no attention to human guilt and sin.

b) *In the manner of redemption.* According to Christian belief the Redemption was accomplished by the sacrificial death of the incarnate Son of God. He freed mankind from the guilt incurred by sin and thus gave to every individual member of the human race an opportunity to reach his eternal, supernatural goal. Buddhism, on the contrary, teaches that every man must redeem himself by eradicating all his natural instincts and desires.

c) *In the object of redemption.* The object of the Redemption, according to Christian dogma, is perfect beatitude in the eternal contemplation and possession of the triune God, who is infinite truth and goodness, whereas in the Buddhist sense redemption merely means deliverance from all desires and from pain, and final entrance into Nirvana, a state which Buddha never defined, so that his followers have no means of knowing whether it signifies the complete extinction of the individual or a state of supreme bliss.⁶¹

d) *In the way in which the goal of redemption is to be attained.* Christianity and Buddhism both demand self-denial and mortification, but in different ways. The disciple of Buddha is intent upon suppressing every movement of his appetitive faculties and strives to practice absolute self-renouncement. The Christian ascete practices spiritual and corporal self-denial, but not in order to suppress the appetites and passions, but to direct them towards, and to confirm

⁶¹ Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 316 sqq. A remarkable feature of the passages collected by Oldenberg is that even in the "scriptures" the most important statements are not given as Buddha's own words, but as the exposition of disciples, showing that they had to depend on their own inferences. Cfr. E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 188 sqq.

them in, moral goodness. He renounces the right of holding property and the enjoyment of the fleeting pleasures of this world in order to be able to employ his full strength in the service of God and thereby to obtain everlasting beatitude in Heaven. Thus Buddhism and Christianity are exact opposites in their ascetical teaching: Buddhism spells the absolute negation of life, whereas Christianity affirms life in its highest and noblest sense.

Consequently the Christian and the Buddhist ideas of Redemption differ essentially from each other and the Buddhist doctrine, despite its greater antiquity, cannot possibly have been the model and source of the Christian dogma.

3. The Moral Teaching of Christianity

Buddhism is compared with Christianity also in its ethical teaching, which is said to equal, nay to surpass, that of the Catholic Church. The essence of Buddhist ethics is contained in the fourth of the "Noble Truths" mentioned above, to wit: "The life of true holiness is that of the monk; life in the world is imperfect and necessarily unsatisfactory,—the preparatory stage of the weak." The fundamental precept of the Bud-

dhist monk reads: "Thou shalt separate thyself from this world." ⁶²

The Buddhist norm of morality is not the will of a supreme lawgiver, but the effect of one's actions, the reward or punishment which they entail. Moral goodness is merely a means to attain the ultimate goal of life, namely, relief from pain.

Among the "five orders" the observation of which constitutes the "fivefold righteousness" of the Buddhist, the most remarkable is the first, which forbids him to slay any living creature. Buddha himself explains this command as follows: "A monk will refrain from killing living creatures. . . . He lays down the staff and the weapon. He is sympathetic and merciful; with kindness he aims to promote the welfare of all living beings. That is a part of his righteousness." ⁶³ On the strength of this declaration it has become customary to designate "merciful love for all creatures" as the essence of Buddhist morality, in order to show how closely related that religion is to Christianity. Another resemblance between the two religions, according to certain writers, is the strict life led by the Buddhist monks, their practice of perfect pov-

⁶² Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 338 sq.

⁶³ *Op. cit.*, p. 342.

erty and chastity, and their habit of confessing their transgressions at stated periods.

a) The ethical teaching of Buddhism, taken as a whole, differs essentially from that of Christianity in two respects. *Buddhistic morality*, in consequence of its atheistic foundation, lacks the concept of absolute duty, and its negative goal, relief from pain, has nothing whatever in common with the positive supernatural aim of Christian morality, namely, eternal beatitude in the possession of God. Add to this the consideration that the Buddhist ascete, in opposition to the Christian, who is assisted by divine grace, has to rely entirely upon himself and his natural powers.

b) While the "*merciful love*" of Buddhism bears some external resemblance to Christian charity, the two differ fundamentally in their aims and motives. "The language of Buddhism has no words for the poetry of Christian charity, which St. Paul exalted so highly,—that love which is greater than faith and hope, and without which even he who could speak with the tongues of men and angels would be as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, and thus the realities in which that poetry assumed flesh and blood within the Christian world, have no counterpart in the history of Buddhism. . . .

Buddhism does not command a man to love his enemy, but simply not to hate him; it awakens and nourishes the feeling of amicable benevolence and mercy toward all creatures, without ever forgetting that if the heart adheres to creatures, it will be immersed in pleasure, and consequently in the suffering of this perishable life.”⁶⁴

c) In its external features the ordinary life of *Buddhist monks and nuns* has many points of similarity with the life led by Catholic religious. But one must not overlook the far-reaching differences between the two states. These differences are mainly the following: (1) The rule of life laid down by Buddha binds all his followers, whereas in the Christian Church the religious life is merely a matter of counsel; (2) the “Order” established by Buddha possesses neither vows nor an authoritative government; (3) the spirit and aim of religious life among the Buddhists is closely adapted to the peculiar philosophy of Sākyamuni and therefore differs substantially from that which inspires our Catholic religious Orders.

As to *confession of sins* among the Buddhists, it is not a means of obtaining forgiveness,

⁶⁴ Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 343 sq.

but a disciplinary method of strengthening the will and preserving the penitent from fresh faults and delivering him more and more from the power of desire, which is the cause of all suffering.

No one has thus far been able to show that the religious life, as led in the Catholic Church, depends in any of its essential features on a Buddhistic doctrine or model. But even if such a dependence could be established in regard to outward practices, it would in no wise run counter to Christian principles, for since Jesus Christ left no positive instructions concerning the manner of the religious life, His followers were free to borrow it elsewhere if they preferred.

The case is different with confession, which, in connection with the institution of the Sacrament of Penance,⁶⁵ is governed by a positive command of Christ and consequently could not have been borrowed from Buddhism.

More closely related to Christianity than Buddhism, from the ethical point of view, is the *later Stoicism* represented chiefly by Seneca, Musonius Rufus, Epictetus, and Marcus Aure-

⁶⁵ John XX, 22 sq.

lius. These philosophers both in theory and practice betray an earnest striving after virtue, which is inspired by love of moral purity and, generally speaking, dictated by a sound practical judgment. All their efforts are bent upon delivering themselves from the external goods and the evils of this world in order to find true happiness in self-denial. The height of perfection was reached by the *younger Stoa* in its doctrine of universal love, which embraces all men, even the poorest slave.

It cannot be denied that the later form of Stoicism in its noblest representatives comes very near to Christianity. But it had certain radical defects, which must not be overlooked when there is question of drawing a comparison between the two religious systems. The fact that Seneca ⁶⁶ justifies suicide and Epictetus ⁶⁷ seems to have denied free will and the immortality of the soul, forbids us to put Stoicism and Christianity on the same level. Moreover, the Stoa was not able to give men the strength necessary to comply with its exalted ethical demands and for this reason its influence never went beyond

⁶⁶ Cfr. F. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, Vol. III, 1, 5th ed., Leipsic, 1923, pp. 305 sq., 727; L. F. Miller, *A History of Philosophy*, New York, 1927, p. 63.

⁶⁷ Zeller, *op. cit.*, pp. 746 sq.; Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

a narrow circle of philosophers, whereas Christianity transformed whole nations and raised them to the highest plane of moral perfection.

4. The Incarnation of the Son of God

That the gods assume human form and associate with men and women here on earth, is a belief that frequently recurs in the religions of pagan antiquity. This belief is most plainly exemplified in the *avatars* (incarnations) of the Hindu god Vishnu, the eighth of which is regarded by many as a parallel to the Incarnation of the Divine Logos. Vishnu here appears as identical with the god Krishna, whose terrestrial adventures are recounted in detail in Hindu mythology. Krishna, we are told, was the son of Vāsudeva and Devaki. When he was a child, his uncle strove to take his life, and Krishna was compelled to flee to a foreign country (Gokula), where he was kindly received by shepherds and wrought many astonishing miracles, even before he grew up. As a young man Krishna led a profligate life and, after defeating his uncle, became king of the Yadava, performed many heroic feats, and finally was killed by an arrow shot into his heel.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Cfr. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, Vol. III, 3rd ed., Tübingen, 1905, pp. 138 sq.

While it may be readily admitted that the *avatara* (*i. e.*, descent) of Krishna shows some resemblances with the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, no one can fail to see that these resemblances are purely external. There is no inner relationship between the two doctrines.

a) The accounts that have come down to us concerning the apparitions and incarnations of pagan deities are mythological poems based on a belief in providence and inspired by a desire for help from higher quarters. The account of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, on the other hand, comes to us from historically reliable sources, and the mystery itself, as revelation tells us, has its ultimate cause in a supernatural, divine decree.⁶⁹

b) The manner in which Christ becomes man differs *toto caelo* from that in which the Hindu god assumes flesh. Krishna is the natural son of human parents, whereas Christ enters this world through the supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost.

c) The object of the Incarnation of Christ, according to the express testimony of the Gospels, is the redemption of mankind from sin, whereas no definite object can be assigned to the avatars of Krishna.

⁶⁹ Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, 5th ed., St. Louis, 1925.

d) The career of Krishna is characterized by an objectionable eroticism, which stands in the sharpest possible contrast to the purity and holiness of Christ.

In view of these fundamental differences the Gospel narrative cannot possibly have been inspired by the Krishna myth.

5. The Earthly Life of the Son of God

Some events in the life of Buddha exhibit remarkable analogies with corresponding facts in the life of Christ. Among them are the miraculous conception and birth of the Saviour, His meeting with Simeon in the Temple, the forty days' fast, His temptation by Satan, and His transfiguration on the Mountain. These resemblances have led some Rationalist critics to assert that the New Testament derives from Buddhistic sources. In order to enable us to make a fair comparison, let us first survey the respective events in the life of Buddha.

The Miraculous Conception and Birth of Buddha.—Buddha resided in heaven before he began his life as a penitent on earth. When he left, he called together the gods and instructed them concerning the 108 "light-giving gates of the law." In vain the sons of the gods begged

him not to darken heaven by his departure. Meanwhile, on earth, Queen Maya was preparing herself by a fast to become the mother of Buddha. Buddha entered her body as a ray of light or, according to another tradition, as a small white elephant. After ten months, when the child was to be born, the Queen asked her husband for permission to visit the beautiful garden Lumbini in Kapilavastu. She set out with a large retinue of attendants, and upon her arrival sat down under the most beautiful of all the trees in the garden, where Buddha emerged from her womb, was received by the gods of the four winds and given his first bath by a hundred thousand sons of gods. Sitting upon a lotus blossom, he looked about with the mien of a mighty lion, loudly proclaimed his superiority to all the gods, and announced that redemption was nigh.⁷⁰

a) *Buddha's Meeting with Asita*.—A wise man by name of Asita ascends into the Tusita-heaven during his meditations and there learns that a great Buddha has been born on earth. Scanning the world with divine vision, he beholds the child in the palace of King Suddho-

⁷⁰ K. von Hase, *Neutestamentliche Parallelen zu buddhistischen Quellen* (*Biblische Zeit- und Streitfragen*, 1. Serie, Heft 12), Berlin, 1905, pp. 12 sq.

dana at Kapilavastu, where he is adored by the whole world and extolled by an army of heavenly spirits. Asita descends from heaven, goes to the palace of the king, and says to him: "Rajah, a son has been born to thee; I wish to see him." The king orders the child to be brought in to pay homage to the noble Brahman visitor. But Asita arises from the throne upon which he has been placed, bows low before the child, and exclaims: "Incomparable is this boy, the best of men." Then he suddenly begins to weep, and when he is asked for the reason, replies: "Because I am old and feeble, and therefore shall not see the magnificence of the Buddha into whom this child will develop."⁷¹

b) *The Temptation and the Fast.*—The temptation of Buddha is differently reported in the various sources available to us. One authority says that Māra (the wicked one), dreaming that his kingdom was in danger, summons

⁷¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 14 sq. For different other versions of the Asita story see E. J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London and New York, 1927, pp. 28 sqq. Oldenberg rejects the legend as highly colored poetry, and for the "canonical" accounts, based upon the poem, only claims that they are "unadorned fragments of the little that an older generation knew, or thought it knew, of those things." (Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 59.)

his army against Buddha, who sits alone under a tree, and tries to scare him by the aid of innumerable monsters which he has gathered. Buddha merely shakes his head, which is enough to make Māra take to his heels, and the projectiles which the soldiers send after him are changed into flowers. But Māra refuses to desist from his purpose and says to his daughters: "Go and see whether Buddha is susceptible to the charms of love." But their seductive advances are repulsed. The deities of the Bodhi tree praise Buddha and revile Māra. The wicked one makes a third attempt; but Buddha touches the earth with his hand, and it gives forth a mighty roar, which chases Māra away.

According to another version, Māra appeared to Buddha in the air and cried: "Do not lead the life of a penitent! In seven days thou shalt be lord of the universe." But Buddha refused to listen; sitting immovably with crossed feet for six years, he endeavored to obtain visions and magic powers. After he had fasted forty-seven days and nights, Māra again appeared to tempt him and said: "Sweet creature, your end is near; offer sacrifice and eat a portion of the meat to save your life." Buddha answered: "Death is the inevitable termination of life. Why should

I try to avoid it? He who falls in battle is a noble hero. He who is defeated is as good as dead. Demon, I will soon triumph over thee!" ⁷²

c) *The Transfiguration*.—Towards the end of his life Buddha was presented with a golden robe. When his favorite disciple Ānanda invested him with the garment, suddenly his body became so bright that the garment seemed to have lost its lustre. Thereupon Buddha said to Ānanda: "This takes place on two occasions—on the night when the perfect man reaches his enlightenment, and when he attains final Nirvāṇa." ⁷³

a) If it were true, as has been claimed, that important events in the life of Christ were borrowed from Buddhist sources, and consequently were nothing but pure poetry, the Gospels could no longer be accepted as history. But they *are* history, as we have demonstrated, genuine and reliable history, and therefore their

⁷² Hase, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 sq.; for the Pāli version of the temptation of Buddha see Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 71 sq.

⁷³ E. Hardy, *Der Buddhismus*, new ed. by R. Schmidt, Münster, 1919, pp. 41 sq. Thomas (*The Life of Buddha*, 245 sq.) notes that "this is the whole of the evidence" on Buddha's alleged transfiguration and that the story quoted by Van den Berg van Eysinga (*Indische Einflüsse auf evangelische Erzählungen*, Göttingen, 1904) from Bigandet's *Life of Gautama* is a mere Burmese elaboration of this passage.

contents cannot have been taken from Buddhist mythology.

b) If we compare the Buddhistic tales with the Gospel reports, we find a remarkable resemblance in some points, but we also find so many important differences that the two sources cannot possibly be accepted as of equal worth. Christ and Buddha are both miraculously conceived; but the circumstances under which they are conceived and born into the world have nothing whatever in common. The baroque character of the Buddhist sources, when compared with the plain unvarnished story of the Gospels, shows that they are not history, but pure legend. Simeon and Asita both pay homage to a newborn infant and enthusiastically proclaim his mission; but the manner of their appearance, their personal attitude towards the child, and the nature of their paeans, differ *toto caelo* from one another. Both Buddha and Christ prepare themselves by long-continued fasting for their career as founders of a new religion; both are tempted by the devil, who promises them the dominion of the world; both emerge triumphantly from the temptation. But the history of the respective temptations shows important variations. The temptation of Christ on the

roof of the Temple has no counterpart in the life of Buddha. Māra only tries to persuade Buddha to eat, in order to rekindle his will to live, whereas the devil attempts to seduce Christ in order to work miracles for a purely selfish purpose. Māra promises Buddha that he will make him ruler of the world if he will give up his penitential practices, while the devil promises Christ universal dominion if He will fall down and adore him.

The transfiguration of Buddha resembles the transfiguration of Christ in this respect that both bodies are described as shining with overwhelming brightness. But of the other circumstances of the transfiguration of Christ not one has an analogue in the life of Buddha.

c) After deducting the numerous and important differences, how are we to explain the resemblances that still remain between the life of Christ and that of Buddha? Some of them, as, *e. g.*, the tale of Buddha's miraculous conception and birth, and his victory over the demons, can no doubt be deduced from the analogous mission and conditions of life of the two personages. But quite a number of them for the present remain inexplicable. This much, however, can be said with assurance: The similarity between Buddha and Christ is not so great as to permit

us to assume that the Gospels were derived from Buddhistic sources.⁷⁴

Nor is there any historical evidence that our Gospels have been influenced by Buddhism. True, in the early days of Christianity, there was a lively commerce between Rome and Greece on the one side, and India and China (via Syria) on the other; but we have no historic warrant for believing that Buddhistic doctrines and legends were brought to the Occident at this period. The very name Buddha is unknown in Europe before the close of the second century A. D.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ E. J. Thomas, one of the best recent writers on the subject of Buddhism, says (*op. cit.*, p. 238): "Although in the earliest legends there is no mention of this miraculous birth, yet the belief may be pre-Christian. Even so the question whether it has influenced Christian dogma does not deserve further discussion." The Annunciation has been compared by A. J. Edmunds with the interpretation of Māhāmāya's dream by the Brahmins; his theories are discussed and refuted by L. de la Vallée Poussin in *La Revue Biblique*, 1906, pp. 353 sqq. All the important passages for determining the question of the relation of the Gospel accounts to Buddhism have been collected by R. Seydel in *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zur Buddhasaga und Buddha-Lehre mit fortlaufender Rücksicht auf andere Religionskreise untersucht*, Leipzig, 1822, and by G. A. Van den Bergh van Eysinga in *Indische Einflüsse auf evangelische Erzählungen*, Göttingen, 1904. The last-mentioned writer, who canvasses the field very thoroughly, finds only fifteen instances of parallels to incidents in the Gospels that are important enough for discussion (cfr. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 238).

⁷⁵ It first occurs in the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria, I. I, c. xv (Migne, *P. G.*, VIII, 780).

d) On the other hand, it is not impossible that Buddhism may have been influenced by Christianity. True, Buddha himself lived about 500 years before the Founder of the Christian religion; but in the course of centuries Buddhism came in contact with many other philosophies and religions and, by borrowing from them elements which were originally foreign to it, underwent many important changes. This statement applies particularly to the accounts that have come down to us of the life of Sākyamuni. The Buddha legend attained its definitive form only after the beginning of the Christian era. There is reason to suppose that Christianity was introduced into India at an early date. The ancient legend that St. Thomas the Apostle preached the Gospel in that far-off country and visited the court of King Gundaphorus, seem to be based on reliable evidence. The description of the relations existing between the near East and India, as contained in the legend of St. Thomas, agrees with the historical facts so far as they are known to us, and ancient coins, recently discovered, prove that a king by name of Gundaphorus (Gundapharna) actually ruled about the year 50 A.D., in Northwestern India. Hence, it is not at all impossible that Christian

doctrines may have influenced Buddhism in the Apostolic age.

e) There are facts which seem to indicate that Buddhism did come into direct contact with Christianity in the first and second centuries, and was essentially transformed by the latter, and that this is the real source of the resemblances which exist between the two religions. Joseph Dahlmann, S.J., has called attention to the fact that in the second century of the Christian era a peculiar change took place in the Buddhistic religion. Up to that time Buddha was represented by the fine arts impersonally, as an abstract figure, *e. g.*, the wheel of doctrine. In the second century he begins to occupy a dominating position as god and redeemer in worship and art. His figure is not clothed according to Hindu custom, but he wears a garment that was common in Greece and Rome at that time. It is evident that this garment is borrowed from the West. Since Buddha suddenly appears in Hindu works of art clad in Occidental garb just about the time when the Christian religion was first introduced into India, it is reasonable to suppose, with Father Dahlmann, that Buddhism derived the figure of Buddha as redeemer from the Christian Church. "Two

facts are certain: (1) that under King Gundapharna Christianity penetrated to the regions along the Indus and Kabul rivers, which that Hindu-Parthian monarch had partly inherited and partly conquered; (2) that at the time when Christianity was brought to the Kabul valley, the afore-mentioned change in worship and art began to take place in Gandhāra. The same Buddha, whose figure had been carefully concealed, suddenly appears in the monuments of Buddhist art, not as a simple messenger of redemption, as in the ancient Buddhist legend, but as god and redeemer of the world, not in ordinary Hindu apparel, but in a garment similar to that worn by the higher classes during the first centuries of the Roman Empire in Antioch and Rome. . . . No one will deny that there must be some intrinsic connection between these facts. Only by the fact that Christianity began to spread in the valley of the Indus can we explain the change that suddenly came over the very essence of Buddhism." In view of these considerations the same writer says on the subject of the resemblances between Buddhism and Christianity: "If the agreement is really so striking that it can be explained only by the assumption that one party borrowed from the other, then the religious worship and art of

Buddhism have borrowed from Christianity, not *vice versa*. Together with the idea of the redeemer, which was taken over from the Christian religion, a number of tales connected with the life of Christ have found their way from the Gospels into the legend of Buddha, and through this into the worship and art of Gandhāra."⁷⁶

Dahlmann's theory is not absolutely certain. O. Wecker has tried to show⁷⁷ that Buddhism

⁷⁶ Dahlmann, *Indische Fahrten*, Vol. II, Freiburg i. B., 1908, pp. 99-157. Thomas says on the subject of the Gandhāra sculptures (*op. cit.*, pp. 221 sq.): "It is in the sculptures of the Gandhāra school in the first century B.C. that the earliest figures of Buddha are found. With new believers in the foreign invaders, new sculptors introducing the ideals of Hellenic art, and no doubt a newer and different school of Buddhism, there was a break in the tradition. A type of the figure of Buddha modelled on that of Apollo was created, from which the Indian and all others are derived. In the Gandhāra type the hair is long and gathered up with a band into a bunch forming a prominence on the top of the head. It is this feature which, as M. Foucher shows, explains the peculiar shape of the head on the later Indian form. On this the prominence remains, but it becomes a part of the skull, and the sculptor being unable to reproduce the flowing lines of hair, covered the head with small circular knobs, which are sometimes elaborated into curls turning to the right." A. Foucher discusses these problems at length in *Les Scènes Figurées de la Légende de Bouddha*, Paris, 1896; *Étude sur l'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde*, Paris, 1900; *Étude sur l'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde d'après des Textes Inédites*, Paris, 1905; *l'Art Gréco-Bouddhique du Gandhāra*, 2 vols., Paris, 1905-08; *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays*, Paris and London, 1917.

⁷⁷ "Christlicher Einfluss auf den Buddhismus" in the *Theologische Quartalschrift* of Tübingen, 1910, pp. 417-457; 538-565.

may have been led by an independent process of thought to worship its founder as god and redeemer, and it is, therefore, possible that only the manner of representing Buddha is to be attributed to Occidental influence. Nevertheless it is plain that the opinion of those who attempt to trace Christianity to Buddhist sources is untenable.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ After reviewing the above-quoted "parallels" between Buddhism and Christianity, and a few others for which we have not the space, Dr. Edward J. Thomas, sub-librarian of the Cambridge University Library, whose competency in the matter is undisputed and whose "freedom from bias" is highly praised by *The Month* (London, 1917, p. 565), concludes a careful comparison of Buddhism and Christianity as follows: "The Gospel stories all belong to the first century A.D. They were all written down at a time when a living tradition and memory of the events may have existed. For one school this tradition did exist. The story of the Samaritan woman or the choosing of the disciples was told because there really was a Samaritan woman and disciples who had been fishermen. In this case we are dealing with historical events, so that any resemblances to the legend of Buddha are merely accidental curiosities. For others the Gospels even in their earliest form are not a collection of actual memories, but only the attempts of the early Christians to imagine a historic setting for their peculiar beliefs. Even in this case the question whether Indian legends contributed to the resulting structure is a question of literary history that has never been convincingly decided, and in many cases never seriously considered. If scholars could come to an agreement on what instances are 'cogent parallels' or cases of actual borrowing, we should then have the data of a problem for the historians to decide. But so far this hope is illusory. Seydel's fifty instances are reduced by Van den Bergh to nine. In proportion to the investigator's direct knowledge of the Buddhist

6. The Death and Resurrection of Christ

The death and Resurrection of Christ have their parallel in the dying and resurgent god of certain other religions. This idea occurs in Western Asia and found its symbolic representation in the so-called mystery-religions of pagan antiquity. With the possible exception of Mithraism, the death and revival of a god, and the love of a goddess for a god, whom she loses, recovers, and reawakens to life, is common to all the Oriental mystery-religions known to us.

sources the number seems to decrease. E. W. Hopkins discusses five 'cogent parallels,' but does not consider any of them very probable (*India Old and New*, pp. 125, 144). Garbe assumes direct borrowing in four cases, Simeon, the temptation, Peter walking on the sea, and the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Charpentier considers Simeon the only unobjectionable example (*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 1915, 442, reviewing Garbe's *Indien und das Christentum*). Other scholars reject all connection. In any case the chief events of the life—birth, renunciation, enlightenment, and death, the very items which might give strength to the comparison—disappear from the question. Van den Bergh van Eysinga also discusses instances of parallels in the Apocryphal Gospels. Some of these works show a knowledge of names connected with North West India, and the relationship depends here upon the contact between Indian culture and early Christian missions in the East. This is a quite different question from that of the presence of Indian legends in Palestine, and lends no additional support to a theory concerning the canonical Gospels that breaks down in every one of its supposed proofs." (*The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, London and New York, 1927, pp. 247 sq.)

With the Egyptians it is Osiris and Isis; with the Phœnicians and Syrians, Adonis and Astarte; with the Phrygians, Attis and Cybele. The Hellenic parallels do not fit very well into this scheme, but in them, too, the death of a hero and his survival as a god play an important rôle.⁷⁹

The mystery-religions are based partly upon the mundane phenomena of the annual decay and reawakening of nature, partly upon analogous events observed in the sky, such as the daily rising and setting of the sun, the annual solstices, the disparition and reappearance of the moon, the phases of some of the constellations,—which phenomena were interpreted as the death and resurrection of certain deities.

The mystery-religions of antiquity are, of course, far more ancient than Christianity, and as not only the Christian belief in the death and Resurrection of the Godman is substantially connected with the ideas underlying the pagan mysteries, but some of the Christian festivals

⁷⁹ J. Blötzer, S.J., "*Das heidnische Mysterienwesen zur Zeit der Entstehung des Christentums*," in the *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, 1906, pp. 390 sq. These parallels are worked out in detail, and not without frequent exaggeration, by S. Angus in his work, *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity: A Study in the Religious Background of Early Christianity*, London, 1925; new ed., London and New York, 1928.

coincide with the celebration of the corresponding pagan mysteries, some scholars regard the belief in the death and Resurrection of Christ as a remnant of the pagan mystery-cults.⁸⁰

a) In carefully considering the resemblances that exist between the pagan and Christian beliefs here under examination, we must not lose sight of the important differences between them. The mysteries symbolize the death and resurrection of nature, whereas Christianity believes in the real death and genuine Resurrection of a historical person, namely, Jesus Christ. The pagan conception has for its object the death and resurrection of a god, whereas Christianity attributes both, not to the deity as such, but to the human nature of Christ hypostatically united with the Godhead. The pagan god dies because fate condemns him to death, whereas Jesus Christ offers Himself voluntarily as a victim for the sins of mankind.

b) The hypothesis under consideration has the further defect that it lacks a historical basis and flatly contradicts such well authenticated documents as the four Gospels, which report the death and Resurrection of the Godman as absolutely certain historical facts, and leave no room

⁸⁰ Cfr. S. Angus, *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity*, pp. 60, 97 sq.

for the suspicion that these facts may be poetical fancies or myths. Therefore, as long as the historical credibility of the Gospels is not conclusively refuted, there is no reason for assuming that the idea of the dying and re-arising God-man is borrowed from the mystery-religions of pagan antiquity.

c) However, we do not mean to deny that there is a certain interdependence between Christianity and the pagan mysteries. Though the Christian religion was not objectively altered by the adoption of pagan notions from the mystery cults, there may possibly have been some borrowing from the latter in regard to the celebration of certain ecclesiastical festivals. Thus some writers believe that the twenty-fifth of December as the birthday of Jesus is a Christian pendant of the pagan "*dies solis invicti*," which was celebrated on that same day because it was the day on which the sun began to grow stronger and to overcome the night. *Christmas* is first mentioned by a chronographer of the year 354 and, if we understand that writer correctly, was first celebrated at Rome in the year 335,⁸¹ and the appearance of Christ as the Light

⁸¹ "*VIII kal. Ian. natus Christus in Betleem Iudeae.*" (*Mon. Germ. Hist.*, IX, *Chronica Minora*, I, ed. Th. Mommsen, Berlin, 1892, p. 71.)

of the world is paralleled with the "*dies solis invicti*" of the Romans by several ancient Christian writers, *e. g.*, St. Augustine, Pseudo-Ambrose, and St. Gregory of Nyssa. We may, therefore, admit with Duchesne (who, however, determines the 25th of December differently)⁸² that the connection between the festival of Christmas and that of the "*dies solis invicti*" was established under the influence of the pagan mystery cults,⁸³ *i. e.*, to displace them for the converts from paganism.

The case is different with *Easter*. This festival, it is true, occurs in spring, which fact establishes a parallel between the Resurrection of Christ and the reawakening of nature after the long sleep of winter. But we have no reason to assume a real dependence of the former festival on the latter. The Christian feast of Easter as a memorial of the Resurrection of Christ simply took the place of the Jewish Passah, which in turn did not originate in the pagan mystery cults, but was established to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from the yoke of the Egyptians.⁸⁴

⁸² *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, p. 254.

⁸³ *Kirchl. Handlexikon*, II, 2674.

⁸⁴ Cfr. H. Thurston, S. J., in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XI, pp. 512 sqq.

Nor can we admit that Easter was borrowed indirectly through the Old Testament, which is said to have derived the idea of a suffering and subsequently glorified redeemer-god from the pagan mystery-religions. The idea of a suffering Messiah was foreign to Jewish theology, and there is no evidence whatever to indicate that the Hebrew prophets hark back to the pagan mysteries when they speak of the suffering and glorified Messiah.

7. Baptism and the Eucharist

Not only the life of Christ and some of His doctrines, but also certain features of Christian worship are said to be derived from ancient paganism. Chief among these are Baptism and the Eucharist. That these Sacraments have striking parallels in the mystery-religions of pagan antiquity was noticed by the early Christian apologists. Thus Tertullian says: "He [the devil] also baptizes some—that is, his own believers and faithful followers; he promises the putting away of sins by a laver [of his own]; and if my memory still serves me, Mithra there [in the kingdom of Satan] sets his mark on the foreheads of his soldiers; celebrates also the oblation of bread, and introduces an image of

the Resurrection, and before a sword wreathes a crown.”⁸⁵

* What is the relationship between the aforementioned Christian Sacraments and the pagan mysteries?

a) *Baptism*.—The rite by which neophytes were received into the mysteries of Isis and Mithra shows a marked resemblance to Christian Baptism, not only in the external ablutions which formed part of the ceremony, but likewise in the underlying idea of the figurative death and rebirth of the *baptizandus* in connection with the death and resurrection of a god. “We shall have to regard it as a well authenticated historical fact,” says Blötzer, “that the idea of a mystic death and a mystic rebirth occupied the very centre of the rite of initiation in the mystery-religions with which we are best acquainted. Through this rite the candidate becomes in a special manner the protégé of the respective deity and a member of his or her

⁸⁵ *De Praescript. Haeret.*, c. 40 (Migne, P.L., II, 54 sq.): “*Tingit et ipse [diabolus] quosdam, utique credentes et fideles suos; expositionem delictorum de lavacro repromittit; et si adhuc memini, Mithra signat illic in frontibus milites suos; celebrat et panis oblationem et imaginem resurrectionis inducit, et sub gladio redimit coronam.*” The last sentence is obscure; P. Holmes (*The Writings of Tertullianus*, Vol. II, Edinburgh, 1870, p. 48, n. 7) thinks the allusion is to a pretended martyrdom. Cfr. Cumont, *Les Mystères de Mithra*, Paris, 1902, p. 130.

group of worshippers. It was believed that before this mystic death man was unholy, but after his spiritual rebirth he became a new creature, pleasing to the deity.”⁸⁶

The resemblances between the pagan mysteries and Christian Baptism are offset by several important differences.

a) The pagans expected moral purification from the mystical death and resurrection of the deity, whereas in the Christian Church these effects are ascribed to the real death and resurrection of a historical personage.

β) *Pace* Tertullian,⁸⁷ it is not certain that the ancient pagans attributed to their mysteries the power of forgiving sins. One of the leading Protestant authorities on the subject, Dr. C. Clemen, says: “It is not likely that the forgiveness of sins, which in the Acts of the Apostles is represented as the result of Baptism, was expected from the [pagan] mysteries.”⁸⁸

γ) Some assume that the effects of baptism, as originally practiced in the pagan mystery-

⁸⁶ J. Blötzer, S. J., “*Das heidnische Mysterienwesen und die Hellenisierung des Christentums*,” in the *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, Vol. LXXII (1907), pp. 186 sq. Cfr. Angus, *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity*, pp. 81-83.

⁸⁷ *De Bapt.*, 5; cfr. *De Praescript. Haeret.*, 40.

⁸⁸ C. Clemen, *Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Neuen Testaments*, Giessen, 1909, p. 180.

religions, were not regarded as moral, but merely as indicative of lustral purification, and that the later character of the rite as a means of atonement and consecration was derived from the Christian Church. The fact that the *kriobolia* and *taurobolia* of the ancient Phrygians still appear in documents of the second and third century after Christ as mere sacrifices of rams and bulls, without any consecratory effects, and that the Neo-Platonists notoriously strove to elevate the religious beliefs of paganism by incorporating Jewish and Christian elements with them, seems to confirm the theory in question.⁸⁹

Are we, therefore, constrained to admit that Christian Baptism was derived from a kindred pagan rite?

(1) There are no intrinsic reasons which compel us to admit such a dependency. For in spite of many resemblances, there always remains the possibility of an independent development of the baptismal rite in both Christianity and the pagan religions. The desire for deliverance from sin, which was so generally felt in pagan antiquity,⁹⁰ favors the supposition that Baptism originated among the gentiles. The use of water as an external symbol of purification suggested itself

⁸⁹ Blötzer, *l. c.*, pp. 190 sqq.

⁹⁰ Cfr. Angus, *The Mystery-Religions*, pp. 95 sq.

naturally enough, and the simile of death and resurrection had a natural basis in the candidate's conversion and his resolve to give up his former life and become a new man.

(2) Extrinsic motives in the form of absolutely reliable historical documents forbid us to assume that Christian Baptism was *directly* borrowed from the pagan mystery-religions. For Baptism was in vogue as a rite of reception among the Christians of Palestine long before they came into more intimate contact with the pagan world, while, on the other hand, we know from the Gospels⁹¹ that Christ Himself instituted this Sacrament.

However, though it can be better explained from the Mosaic law (Lev. XV, 5),⁹² we need not deny the possibility that the baptismal rite may have been *indirectly* borrowed from paganism. As Christian Baptism succeeded the Jewish baptism of John, thus or in a similar manner the latter may have been derived from some pagan rite. If this assumption could be shown to be justified, we should have to regard Christian and Jewish Baptism after the analogy of certain pre-

⁹¹ Cfr. Matth. XXVIII, 19.

⁹² On the baptism of proselytes ("Proselytentaufe") see Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Vol. I, Munich, 1922, pp. 102-114.

cepts of the Mosaic law, which took gentile customs, imbued them with a new spirit, and thus consecrated and transformed them into means of supernatural grace.

b) *The Eucharist*.—In several of the pagan mystery-religions we meet with a sacred repast or banquet which in more than one respect resembles the Christian Eucharist, and for this reason is regarded by some learned scholars as the origin and exemplar of the latter. This is noticeable most of all in the cult of Mithra. St. Justin Martyr says: "Which [namely, the celebration of the Eucharist] the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithra, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of the initiation, you either know or can learn."⁹³ Tertullian briefly mentions that bread was offered at the mystery rites.⁹⁴ F. Cumont describes the ceremony as follows: "In the Mazdaic mass the celebrant blessed bread and water, which he mixed with intoxicating Haoma juice prepared by himself, and consumed these foods in the course of his liturgical function. These ancient

⁹³ *Apolog.*, I, 66 (Migne, *P. G.*, VI, 429); *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. II, Edinburgh, 1867.

⁹⁴ *De Praescript. Haer.*, c. 40 (*P. L.*, II, 55).

customs had survived in the Mithraic initiations. . . . Bread and a cup filled with water were placed before the priest, who pronounced the sacred formulas over it. This oblation of bread and water, to which no doubt at a later date wine was added, is compared by the Christian apologists to Communion. Like the latter, the former was granted only after a long novitiate. Probably only the initiates who had reached the degree of 'lions' were admitted to the ceremony, and it was presumably for this reason that they were called 'participants.' A recently published remarkable basrelief gives us a picture of such a meal. In front of two persons stretched upon a couch provided with cushions, stands a tripod with four small loaves of bread, all marked with the sign of the cross. Round about this tripod are grouped the mystagogues of different degrees, one of whom, a Persian, passes around a drinking-horn, while a second *rhyton* is held in the hand of one of the worshippers. These *agapae* are evidently the ritual commemorations of the banquet which Mithra took with Sol before he ascended to heaven. From this mystic meal, particularly from the consumption of the wine, supernatural effects were expected. The intoxicating drink not only bestowed strength of body and material pros-

perity, but also wisdom of the spirit; it steeled the neophyte for his struggle with the evil spirits, nay, more, it guaranteed him, as well as his god, a glorious immortality." ⁹⁵

The existing resemblances between the Mithraic banquet and the Christian Eucharist are limited mainly to the external rite. The underlying ideas differ radically. The pagan worshipper, in participating in the Mithraic banquet, does not believe that he is consuming the deity, as the Christian does in the Eucharist, but merely expects to be endowed with supernatural power. "It cannot be proved by historical evidence that anyone outside the Christian Church ever believed that he consumed a god at the sacred banquet." ⁹⁶

No causal connection between the mysteries of Mithra and the Christian Eucharist can be shown to exist. The Eucharistic rite was celebrated among the primitive Christians long before they came in contact with the pagans. It was introduced at the express command of

⁹⁵ F. Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*; we translate from the German ed. by Gehrich, Leipsic, 1903, pp. 118 sq., as neither the French original nor the English translation is available. A summary of the latter is given by G. R. S. Mead in *The Mysteries of Mithra*, London and Benares, 1907.

⁹⁶ Blötzer, *l. c.* (see note 59), p. 196; cfr. Clemen, *op. cit.* (see note 60), p. 206.

Christ,⁹⁷ who, in instituting this Sacrament, had in view the Jewish Pasch, not some pagan form of worship.

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CONCLUSION

THE DUTY OF EMBRACING THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Man's absolute dependence upon God obliges him to submit to every divine command, no matter whether it is expressed in human nature or in a positive divine ordinance. We have demonstrated in this volume that on two separate and distinct occasions such supernatural ordinances of the divine will were manifested to man on a large scale. The first was directed to a single nation, the second to the whole of mankind. As in the Old Testament the Jewish people were obliged to accept the revealed truths and to submit to the revealed precepts of God, so in the New Testament all men are obliged to accept the teaching of Christianity and to live up to that teaching in their daily life.

The proof of this thesis is based upon the nature of the Christian religion. A religion which presents itself as the only true religion, obliging all men for all time, must be accep-

ted by all; for every man is in duty bound to accept that religion which he recognizes as prescribed by God. Now the New Testament revelation shows that the Christian religion is the true religion, binding upon all men for all time. Therefore, the Christian religion must be accepted, *i. e.*, believed and lived up to, by all men to the end of time.

The truth of the Christian religion requires no further proof, since it is sufficiently guaranteed by its divine origin, which we have demonstrated in this volume.

The obligation of all men to embrace the Christian religion is foreshadowed in the Old Testament prophecies, which describe the kingdom of the coming Messiah as universal both in time and extent. It is still more clearly expressed in the New Testament, for the Founder of the Christian religion commanded His Apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations and to receive all men into the company of His disciples.⁹⁷ Every man is in duty bound to submit himself to the precepts of Christianity, for God wills that all men should believe in Christ;⁹⁸ whoever refuses to believe that He is the Son of God,

⁹⁷ Matth. XXVIII, 19.

⁹⁸ John VI, 29.

"is already judged"⁹⁹ and shall be condemned.¹ "There is no other name under heaven given to men," whereby they can be saved, than that of Jesus Christ.² Thus will it remain as long as the Kingdom of the Messias, the New Testament economy of grace, endures, that is, to the end of time.³

With the establishment of Christianity, therefore, every other religion that formerly had a claim upon the allegiance of men, lost that claim, and together with it whatever importance it may have possessed before Jesus Christ came into the world. Natural religion, which satisfied the needs of uncorrupted human nature, is no longer sufficient either as to doctrine, goal, or means of grace, and every other form of supernatural religion, whether given, like primitive revelation, for the whole of mankind, or, like the Mosaic law, for a particular nation, has been abrogated for all time by the more perfect religion of Christ.

After what we have said it is certain beyond doubt that the religion which Christ brought

⁹⁹ John III, 18.

¹ Mark XVI, 16; Gal. II, 16.

² Acts IV, 12.

³ Matth. XIII; XXVIII, 20.

down from Heaven is the only valid norm according to which God wishes to be worshipped under the New Covenant. But it still remains to be seen how the doctrine of Jesus Christ, which forms the basis of the Christian religion, is made known to each individual human being. This question will form the subject-matter of the third volume of this *Handbook*, which will deal with *The Church of Christ*.

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